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To

Mr Thomas Glendinning

with the kind regards

of the author

POEMS

POEMS

SECOND SERIES

BY

JAMES MATHER

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ERRATA.

Page 2, Preface, *read* my Address to Mont Blanc, *for* My Address to Mont Blanc.

Page 51, *read* Mountains of the Moon, *for* mountains of the moon.

,, 51, ,, sons of Æthiop, *for* sons Æthiop.

,, 71, ,, human soul, *for* human soil.

,, 106, ,, scuffie broun, *for* scuffie brown.

,, 124, ,, love inspired, *for* love-inspired.

,, 135, ,, Pluto's home, *for* Plute's home.

,, 164, ,, hast come, *for* has come.

,, 169, ,, Nith and Scaur (Scaur is a water), *for* Nith and scaur.

,, 174, ,, summer's maiden queen, *for* summer's queen.

,, 212, ,, seldom ever prize, *for* seldom prize.

,, 221, ,, 19th February, 1900, *for* 19th February, 1901.

,, 279, ,, Minniepool, *for* Minnypool.

PREFACE.

This volume follows in the wake of a book entitled *Poems*, which was issued some years ago. The verdict of some critics was favourable; that of others the reverse. To those critics who exhibited a discerning and a fair mind I am not ungrateful. Rational and honest criticism authors should invite, and render honour to men who direct the public how to survey and test the wells of literature where they spring up new-born 'neath the eye of the dawn. Some critics have much to do, many works being sent for their opinion. It is not to be wondered at that, however shrewd and intuitive, they sometimes err. The momentary glance is not always able to see whether the landscape before it yields gold or copper. Some of my critics gave proof that they had read the book, on which they passed a fair verdict, ministering praise and blame in a rational fashion. Others, again, seem to have thought themselves capable of judging a book by a line or a couplet as a physician judges the health of a man by the beat of his pulse. The physician knows where to find and how to feel the pulse; but the critic does not always pitch upon the line that contains the pulse-beat of a book or poem, and least of all is he like to discover it (if, indeed, such a discovery can be made) when he seeks for a line or couplet beneath the average, that he may expend upon it a sparkle of the wit at his

disposal. For this, at times, there may be a measure of excuse when the author fails to make his meaning clear.

The following lines of "My Address to Mont Blanc" were made the subject of comment:—

> For thee the dawn first wakes, and on thy head
> Pours light as ointment pure, fit for thy state.

The critic said I might as well have spoken of pouring cold cream on the Himalayas. His thoughts were moving in a low plane when such an interpretation suggested itself to his mind. Ordinary discernment will mark the difference between an emblematic action, as the ceremony of pouring oil on a man's head in proclaiming him a king, or the dawn's shedding light supernal oil upon Mont Blanc declaring him monarch of mountains, and the finishing touch of the barber as he pours cream upon the polled head.

Some reviewers are exacting taskmasters and John Grumlies, whom no man can please, whether woman can teach them or no. In the poem on Mont Blanc I spoke at the outset of the changeless aspect of Nature thus:

> Thy state is changeless all throughout the year,
> No cuckoo voice reminds thee of the Spring,
> No flowers appear upon thy frozen breast,
> Nor well-springs warble music in thine ear!

A critic said that the statement was not scientifically true, as absolute stillness did not prevail. I never meant to affirm absolute immutability, and never thought that any reader would fail to see that I described the general aspect to eye and ear, a mountain, frozen, silent, and ever wearing the garb of winter. But had the critic read the poem through, forty-four lines in all, he would have seen that, not only was the

author aware of the scientific fact of perpetual change, but made use of it as a factor whereby the mountain, in course of time, would doff winter's garb and array him in summer's mantle. If the author states truth it is prose, as if poetry had no acquaintance with reality, and if he goes an hairbreadth beyond the plummet line of literal scientific fact, it is a flaw or a blot. Pegasus must have wings. If he walks and makes the solid earth echo the beat of his hoof, he is a low-born earthly creature, and if he flies, he sins against the law of gravitation, and displays the ignorance of a primitive stage of culture when men thought and wrote without knowing why an apple fell to the ground. Pearls before swine have not found their market, and as little has poetry when laid before the eyes of men who know not the alphabet of their professed calling.

Some critics of a supercilious order judge a book by a line or two severed from the context. One of this class finds a line that seems weak and halting and fit for his arrow. He severs it from the context, and it stands alone, the butt of his inarticulate hee-haw. Such treatment the English language itself could not stand. Some parts of speech are humble and insignificant by themselves, but useful and needful in linking together matters of grave import. The article "the" by itself is of no value, but prefix it to Hee-Haw Critic thus—The Hee-Haw Critic, and let that critic determine how many degrees it has risen above nothing. Without doubt, in his esteem, the mercury in the thermometer has taken a sudden, high leap. It is said that Homer sometimes nods, and it is well that he does; for if every line were freighted with the same amount of thought, or where the thought was lacking and was not required, were charged with a laboured, pompous

diction, causing as much commotion at the birth of a mouse as at the birth of a nation, then, while Homer sweated, his readers would nod. A distinction of language should take shape according to the theme. It would be ridiculous to write of the curling-tongs of a fop in the strain that fitly describes the serpents wreathing round Laocoon and his sons. It is unjust to sample a book by the choice of a mediocre couplet expressing a commonplace, although commonplaces are needful as the alphabet is, and no book is ever without them though the very embodiment of genius.

Again, another critic works the same effect in a different fashion. He peeps into the volume and comes upon a couplet that seems tolerable, yea, forecasts something like genius. It is good, but, alas! it is mated to a couplet of clay. That couplet of clay he deigns not to show. As if he had said, I pluck the only flower in the desert, and save him who sees it from a vain search.

Some reviewers are frugal in expenditure of thought. One opened the volume and with transfixed gaze exclaimed, "An alarming book!" as Dominie Samson cried out, Prodigious! Alarm, real or satirical, was all the utterance he could vouchsafe. Alarm for his father's life, when assassins approached with murderous intent, made the dumb son of Cræsus, the Lydian king, speak; but this critic's alarm divested him of rational discourse. One would desiderate something more human than mere ejaculation, at least from a man who professes to judge thought and expression. But, strange to relate! an answer to the request for a rational verdict is beyond the capacity of the Hee-Haw and the Pooh-Pooh tribe. Pluck the feathers of authority and secrecy from the ravens that haunt the high seats of

literature and with their croaking would frighten simple strangers, what meagre, ill-thriven birds would meet the gazer's eye! And this in spite of the provision all around, the richest that a hungry intellect could desire! It is said that crows are leanest when best fed. If that be true of crows, it finds a parallel in lean ravens and critics who would croak down new authors, and build up their own fortune, repeating by rote that one acquisition of Poe's raven, Nevermore!

One critic was more superb than all the rest. It would seem that he dwelt in the higher latitudes of thought and daily refreshed his spirit with the ambrosial food and nectar of the gods. In an act of condescension, stooping down from his high throne to scan my book, he twisted his neck. Screwing his face with vexation, he lamented that such good paper had been wasted. Forsooth, had it been blank paper, who knows what high thoughts and potent discoveries he might have penned for the edification of sublunary and benighted mortals! Yet paper for him was cheap, and if the world should miss his legacy of genius, the cause will be something else than the lack of paper. There is reason to fear another cause, the lack of mind, ill supplied by overweening conceit. Typeless paper and a blank mind are akin. By those who cannot read printed verse or prose, and far less write or judge it, the best use to which paper and life can be put in their esteem, I trow, is to wrap up a pair of slippers and a mask for an evening party, that lackeys throughout the fortunes of a night may wear the visage of kings and great men, and, as the prompter directs, utter the oracles of a Solomon by rote.

Some deigned to associate my name with great men, not so much to flatter as to dwarf me with untoward

comparisons. It was arrogance in me to address Mont Blanc after Coleridge had written his illustrious ode. I wonder what themes would be left for modern writers were they to pass by all the themes handled before their day, and handled, too, as only genius can. All the fountains of Poesy would be sealed and consecrated to maintain in bloom the memorial gardens of the mighty dead. The song of the lark to-day is unfettered, true, and sweet, unaffected by "the pale cast of thought," the thought that the tribe to which it belongs has sung unnumbered songs stirred by the same emotion. Even so the bard sings with a heart free to utter what moves him, be the occasion rare or common. Do the children refuse to live and think and sing because their fathers did such things?

One critic compared me to Wordsworth when he prosed, Wordsworth bereft of imagination and philosophy. Whether that estimate be correct or no, it is not for me to say, though I may humbly refer the question to those who know what imagination and philosophy are. Another said that my poetry breathed the air of Wordsworth without his ideas. Against this reviewer I have but little to say. On the other hand I am indebted to him for a favourable and appreciative verdict. The only thing I would take exception to is "the air of Wordsworth." True, he says, I am "no slavish imitator." This last modifying phrase will not suffice either. I am not conscious of echoing the strain of any bard, and have never made any man my model. Indeed, I could not imitate if I would, nor would I if I could, assured that a living man is more than a shadow, though the shadow be a giant in length and breadth, and the lips that speak from the fulness of the heart more potent than the whispered echo of the

hollow rock. Whatever my ideas be, they have been nourished by inhaling an atmosphere that is not the exclusive possession of Wordsworth, but the inheritance of Nature, the birthright of every man who sees and thinks for himself and speaks as the heart prompts.

Again, one expressed disappointment because my verse neither echoed nor rehearsed the thoughts of other writers of the day who have handled philosophical questions and enigmas. Every man to his taste. Many follow the hounds and bark because others bark—life to them a chorus—while some take a solitary way and please their own heart, rather than follow the game of the hour. Some birds fly in flocks, and some fly alone. Each mode has its own charm, and Nature is all the richer that the many and the one assume Protean shapes. The mind demands philosophy, as the body in day's lustre shadows forth its form. True philosophy is the garland for which reason of inward necessity must strive. Under the guidance of heaven-born Christian faith, poesy, philosophy and religion, linked hand in hand, form the three graces of the soul, within whose embrace are all the treasures of the mind. Laboured, philosophical argument, when carried through a poem, is apt to prove hostile to the immediate and spontaneous expression of the poetic mood. Some may think that a debatable question where in the one mind the poet and the philosopher have equal sway, and demand a coin with a double superscription as honour to both. Still, in the realm of poetry the appropriate image and superscription pertains to the Muse whose breath at will wakens song from the strings of the harp. Nor need philosophy be absent. Though unobtrusive, as a guest in a friend's house, her presence may occasionally be felt by all in the house, and her

thought expressed by poesy, her host and friend, in coin of living speech, the envy of philosophy herself, though wonderful the anatomical lineaments of thought issued from her own mint. The Muse of poetry clothes the skeleton with flesh and bids it live. True and deep philosophy may evince its presence in the poetic garb of simple and unaffected expression, as gems glitter in the bed of the deep, clear stream that seems shallow to the inexperienced eye; or, in the language of passion and intense thought, when the heart in some tragic extremity is moved to its inmost depths, and in response to its cry, a door in heaven opens, and a voice discloses treasures of life and gladness hitherto hid and unimagined. Then the upheaving earthquake in an hour may lay bare leagues of deep-sea treasures that will put to shame whatever has been amassed by whole generations of divers into the inane. In Christ's hand is the franchise of poetry, as of philosophy, wherewith He imparts the truth that makes free and the joy that will ever sing.

What poetry consists in has been much debated. Men feel its sway, while they cannot define it any more than they can define an original element or power, such as light, whose radiant presence is its only effectual definition, a definition understood by all who have vision. Light speaks to the faculty of light, the eye that sees; and the poet is understood by him in whose heart the fire of Apollo slumbers till kindled anew by the heaven-born ray. But some critics have not seen the face of the Muse. They draw a sketch of what they fancy she should be like, and when she presents herself incarnate in the garb of this or that true poet, coming into the world without their leave and singing regardless of their rules, they will have none of her.

Their test of the poetic faculty has more pretence than virtue in it to discern real excellence. According to their criterion, they have not scrupled to question the right of Burns to a seat on Parnassus. What poetry of the highest order must therefore be condemned!

A certain man and his wife tried many churches, and at last severed connection with them all when they came to the conclusion that there was no church in the land but that in their own house. Even that select church could not hold together, but divided into two separate atoms of dubious condition. The wife doubted the husband, and the husband doubted the wife. Thus the visible church vanished like a thin mantle of mist from the mountain top 'neath a scorching sun. Even so, superfine critics ungarland the brows of all the bards, the pet bard of each critic being despoiled by his neighbour to garnish another idol. The nine Muses disdain such finical canons, and are ever furnishing examples of poetic conception and expression which brush away spider webs, that may entangle flies, but never living men.

The miller may lead water to drive his mill, but never in the channel that he makes for it can his artificial stream equal in strength and freedom the river from which it is taken. Such are the channels fashioned by fastidious critics, that with a tribute of tamed water they may drive the mill of some pet theory. As well may a man lay a lead pipe in the Erie's bed above Niagara and say that the puny streamlet piping from its mouth over the rocks is the true essence or heart of the river, all the rest but empty foam, as the critic with his narrow canon or reed affect to lead the broad and deep river of poesy through its strait throat, while he bans all the living water outside

his reed, as if it were spurious, when in truth, if there is any difference, the water that has run in Nature's course, playing with the sun and wind, is sweeter than that which, cramped in unwholesome shade, has caught a taste of the lead. A survey of criticism cannot fail to show the existence and self-importance of a class of critics whose eyes, microscopic as their souls, see parts as wholes, and mistake a man's little finger for his whole body. Their influence is all the more injurious when spleen and injustice inspire their estimate of authors who are unaware of any wrong they have done to such prescient judges of the Jeffreys order. Authors may well protest against the verdicts of men disqualified to judge, if not from slender intellectual equipment, at least slender intellectual exercise, misguided by contemptuous arrogance toward those who ask the ear of the public for the first time, and blind adulation of authors who have already won a reputation. These Epimethean critics, wise behind-hand, adore Tennyson whom their fathers vilified, and worship Keats whom their fathers slew. Yet the mantle of their fathers is on their shoulders. Why speak of them? They are many, their name is legion; and Folly in the mask of Wisdom mumbles her oracles in the ears of men who think she must be wise, for she sits in high places within the curtains of mystery, like an unseen Japanese king of a former time who seemed a god to the people, but was known to be a weak man by those who saw him in the flesh. After all, an author's fate at last must rest with another tribunal—the circle of ingenuous readers who are willing to receive and prize whatever wholesome instruction and pleasure a book is fitted to impart. At the same time I would here express my indebtedness to critics of another order, the honour of

their profession —and they were not few—whose review was rational and fair, as well as suggestive and instructive in pointing out faults and defects, and gracefully generous in honouring merits.

As for the present volume, it will no doubt partake of the character of the first. Possibly, some who found fault with the simple metres of its predecessor, may find in this more variety. The range of themes is somewhat wide, and may not be without interest to readers who love to ramble at will over Nature's broad inheritance, and who, while they enjoy the description of what is seen and temporal, are still more pleased at heart when that picture without constraint serves as a mountain-top from which the pilgrim's eye may see the land beyond time and the New Jerusalem in the glow of eternal light.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
Sunrise on Wigtown Bay,	17
Little Bo-Peep,	18
Ken and Dee,	22
Bardristane,	24
Lily,	26
Lines on a Still-born Child,	28
On the Death of my Steed Thyme,	29
May and the Nine Ravens,	31
Pearl,	32
In Memory of Margaret Hall,	35
A Letter to Mr. Thomas Murray, Moorbrock,	37
The End is not Yet,	41
In Memory of Janet Barbour, Stroancastle,	41
The Jubilee,	42
Spring Up, O Well!	47
In Memory of Queen Victoria,	50
In Memory of the Revd. William Watson,	53
Dunskey Glen,	58
On my Steed, Fancy,	61
Weather Signs,	63
In Memory of Mrs. Robert Brown, Carsphairn,	65
The Mount of Kilvey,	67
Fire,	71
To A. M.,	72
A Sheet of Mist on Cairnsmore-of-Fleet in Autumn,	74
The Hawk and the Lark,	75

PAGE

Kildonan Braes, - - - - 77
Bramble Wine, - - - - 79
The Bállochanâmer, - - - - 81
The Dochart, - - - - 82
The Lochay, - - - - - 85
A Cry from the Wood, - - - 87
Eternity, - - - - - 91
Snowdrop and Yarrow, - - - 92
The Three Giants, - - - - 96
A Chiel in Glenowther, - - - 105
The Falls of Rogie and Tor Achilty, - - 109
The Roman Bridge over the South Calder, - 114
The Banks of Tummel, - - - 118
The Round Tower of Abernethy, - - 120
King Admetus, - - - 124
To Winter, - - - - 161
The Lass amang the Craigs o' Kyle, - - 163
Lia Fail—The Stone of Destiny, - - 164
In Memory of John Harper, Furmiston, - 168
Nancy's Ascent of Ben Cleugh, - - 173
The Semi-Jubilee of the Revd. W. B. R. Wilson, Dollar, - - - - - 179
The Meeting of the Waters, - - 183
In Memory of James Barbour, Glendarroch, - 186
The Light of Men, - - - 189
My Seven League Buits, - - - 190
Blow, blow, ye Winter Winds, - - 194
In Memory of the Revd. James E. Fyfe, Kilmacolm, - - - - - 195
The Abbey Craig, - - - - 202
Grantown Cemetery, - - - - 203
Balmoral, - - - - - 205
The Sky, - - - - - 206
The Reel of Tulloch, - - - 207

PAGE
The Gray Flock, near Mungie, Eaglesham. - 209
Life, - - - - - - 210
On Dr. Forde's leaving the Glenkens for South Africa, - - - - - - 212
An Ode to Love, - - - - - 213
My Heart, my Heart! - - - - 217
On the Marriage of James Hynd and Elizabeth M. Hamilton, - - - - - 218
Scotland, Awake! - - - - - 219
Jephthah's Vow, - - - - - 220
In Memory of Andrew Carson, Newfield, - 221
In Memory of Jessie Gourlay, Dalry, - - 224
To the Revd. John Allan, Brechin, on the Death of his two Infant Children, - - 226
On the Picture of Mr. and Mrs. Geddes in Bridal Array, - - - - - 228
The Rainbow, - - - - - 229
In Memory of John Milligan, Kirkland, - 231
Oh, Where are the Men? - - - - 234
In Memory of Vincent Hall, - - - 236
Andrew Carnegie, - - - - - 239
"She Hath Done What She Could," - - 241
In Memory of William Byers, - - 242
In Memory of Thomas Maxwell, - - - 247
Killiecrankie, - - - - - 252
The Osprey's Nest, - - - - - 256
Ian M'Diarmid, - - - - - 258
Blithe, blithe, O blithe was She! - - 260
Allan's Lovely Daughter, - - - 261
The Tillypourie, - - - - - 262
The Lass o' Durine Moor. - - - 264
The Moors of Balnagown, - - - - 266
Es-calallan—The Fall of the Fair Maid, - 267
The Race with Time, - - - 271

PAGE

Kincardine-on-the-Forth, - - - 272
The Lass o' Rogie, - - - 275
In Memory of Revd. William Storrar, Hardgate, Urr, - - - - - 276
In Memory of the Revd. Robert Lindsay, Creetown, - - - - - 279
The Hill of Barône, Bute, - - - 284
Johnnie Peep's Dream, - - - 285
For a Young Lady's Album, - 296
Spring on the Stinchar, - - - 297
On the Marriage of John Lambie and Isabella D. Hamilton, - - - - 299
A Flower Gatherer, - - - 300
Duncan Ban Macintyre, - - - 301
On the Death of my Mother, Marion Carswell, 301
In Memory of Mrs. Mather, - - - 302
In Memory of Jane S. Murdoch, - - 304
Gallowa, - - - - 310
In Memory of James Hamilton, - 311
Niagara, - - - - 313
The Red River at Winnipeg, - - 315
The Cave and Basin of Sulphur Mountain, Banff, Canada, - - - - 317
The Pelican, - - - - 318
In Memory of John Gairns, - - 318
Horn Lake, Ontario, Canada, - 321
Nelson, British Columbia, - - 323
Moon-rise in Oregon, - - - 324
The River Merced in Yosemitè Valley, California, 326
The Springs of Shasta, California, - - 328
Sunset on the Prairie, - - - 330
Castle Mountain, Rocky Mountains, - 332
Kildonan, Manitoba, - - - 333
The Mariposa Grove, California, - - 334

POEMS.

SUNRISE ON WIGTOWN BAY.

The morning air, a freezing breath,
Blew crisp and keen on hill and fen,
While slept the land a sleep like death,
That pains and baffles mortal men,
As through a bank of darksome cloud
A radiance streamed and burst the shroud,
When rose the sun o'er Wigtown Bay.

The time was in mid-winter drear,
When ice was on the wave of Cree,
And moaning went the dying year
As tide goes soughing to the sea;
When Nature lay in sheets of snow,
And slept like death the turf below,
Then rose the sun o'er Wigtown Bay!

With gold and crimson Solway shone
Beneath the glowing eye of day,
That kindled on each mountain throne
An altar fire of diamond spray;
And o'er the Blednoch and the Cree,
Wide o'er the earth and o'er the sea,
Arose the sun on Wigtown Bay!

I saw the grave-stone clad with snow,
  Above the martyrs' sacred clay,
Where, now two hundred years ago,
  They braved the flood and death's affray,
And rose o'er cruel tyranny,
And anger of the rising sea,
  As glorious morn o'er Wigtown Bay!

Against the wiles of malice fell,
  Two tender women held the faith:
Though chained as by the gate of hell,
  True to their Lord they proved in death;
And gave at once the bloom of youth
And fruit of age to heaven and truth,
  Where shines the sun on Wigtown Bay!

While flourishes the ivy green
  Upon the ruin of Baldoon,
And Blednoch wears a silver sheen
  Beneath the glimmer of the moon;
While breezes haunt the Windy Hill
The martyrs' fame will Scotland thrill,
  And grace, like morn, this Wigtown Bay!

LITTLE BO-PEEP.

O! LITTLE Bo-peep,
  She has but one eye,
She herdeth sheep
  In the deep blue sky,
And when the sun looms o'er the hill
She leads them high and higher still.

Afar! afar!
In silence soft
She leads each star
In realms aloft,
'Yont any view that earth may boast
From hills whose heads in heaven are lost!

And when the sun
Sinks in the west,
His journey done,
And takes his rest,
In azure chambers of the main
This shepherdess brings forth her train.

From hidden dells,
'Mid mountains high,
From dusky fells,
Where lone winds sigh,
This little Bo-peep leads forth to view
Her starry flock on the uplands blue!

O! little Bo-peep,
Take me with thee,
And with thy sheep,
That I may see
The corries deep where they graze at noon,
And the dusky dell where sleeps the moon!

When day is done,
And night draws near,
Then let me down
To earth's green sphere,
That I may view the Milky Way,
Thy shining flock more bright than day!

O! little Bo-peep
Is a shepherdess,
And her starry sheep
In the wilderness
Come forth and graze on the night's dark brow,
And light her face with a diamond glow!

O! little Bo-peep
Herself is a star,
That watch doth keep
Over heaven afar,
That shines in the east at the rise of the sun,
And beams in the west when his journey is done!

When night doth come
Her flock she leads,
And bids them roam
O'er azure meads;
But waits behind at break of day,
And drives them out of sight away!

The morning star,
That is her name;
The evening star,
This, too, her claim.
What shepherdess has such a flock,
All hirsells of the earth doth mock!

But how can she,
With but one eye,
The guardian be
Of all the sky,
The sheep that fleck the Milky Way,
Like snow-flakes in a winter day?

Ah! little Bo-peep,
'Tis not thine eye
That guides those sheep
In the azure high,
But God, who made both you and me,
The heaven above, with earth and sea.

And men are sheep,
Have gone astray
In forest deep
And desert gray
Of sin and sorrow, far from God—
A downward course to a dire abode!

But Jesus Christ
Is the Shepherd good,
Who keeps his tryst
To give us food,
The lambs to feed, the sheep to tend
On the moors of earth till summer end!

When winter's breath
Doth chill the air,
And clouds of death
Crown mountains bare,
He leads His flock to another sphere,
Where it is summer all the year!

If, then, we hear
This Shepherd's voice,
And heavenward steer,
His will our choice;
In Paradise we'll find the fold
Of peace and life for aye untold!

KEN AND DEE.

Upon a bridge o'er Ken I stood,
A mile or more above Glenlee,
Its waters ran, a rushing flood,
Then grew into a lingering sea.

Thy course has been a troublous path
For leagues between the moors and hills,
The passage of a thing in wrath,
Still goaded by a sense of ills!

Now scourged upon the harrow teeth,
Thy waters down the rapids run,
Then in a linn as deep as death,
They hide their sorrows from the sun!

A moment's rest in night's deep core,
Forth go thy swarthy waves to roam,
And whiten as o'er snags they roar,
And veil their haste with ruffled foam!

The furies chase thee all the way,
Till Allan-Gibbon span they press;
But there they halt and yield the prey,
No longer able to distress!

Beyond the bridge thy wave is free,
And gently doth the border kiss;
Slow through the mead, a spreading sea,
Thou lingerest in late-born bliss!

Once thou didst throw thy life away
In hurried course across the rocks;
Now thou wilt lengthen out thy day,
Like shepherd waiting on his flocks!

Though slow thy pace and long the day,
The truant's sunshine sinks at last;
Ken runs her lonely bliss away,
And blends with dark Dee, driving past!

The gloomy Dee might wish for haste
All through his leagues of moorland brown,
For little cheer in all the waste
His lonely wave hath ever known!

Though Ken hath lost her name in Dee,
Her character inspires his mood,
The while he laps the mead and lea,
And slumbers 'neath the shady wood.

Twice precious now the life they have,
And short the course for them to run,
By mount and moor where brackens wave,
And heather blooms in autumn sun!

Soon Ken and Dee their honeymoon
Expend upon the moorlands free;
And all the longest days of June
On wings of light far westward flee!

O blithe their way as down they go
By wood and shaw and honey braes,
Where castles stern weird shadows throw
Upon the light of fleeting days!

Their table-land of joy once past,
Now Ken must follow after Dee,
In straiter course, with ardour fast,
To meet the welcome of the sea!

At length the sea comes up to meet
Their doubtful waters on the strand,
To woo them from their sweet retreat
Of dimpling banks in fairyland!

He takes the terror from their breast,
And draws them with a winning sway;
On shoulders broad their silver crest
Rides forth afar from Galloway!

BARDRISTANE.

It was upon a winter day,
In the month of dark November,
Adown the Cree I took my way,
As well I do remember,
By Cassencary and Carsleuth,
By Kirdale and Barholm forsooth,
Until I halted where the rose
Together with the lily grows
Upon Bardristane.

Full many pleasures there may hide
Within the wrinkles of the shore,
Where up and down goes Solway's tide,
And woos the land now as of yore.

Give me the height above the sea,
Where youth and truth companions be,
Where summer haunts the sunny brae,
And lingers to the shortest day
Around Bardristane!

They say that spring is lovely there,
In woods of oak and hazel brown,
When soars the lark in morning air,
And primrose glory decks the lawn;
And when the hyacinthine bloom,
In azure and with sweet perfume,
Adorns the woods of Galloway,
'Tis joyous in the month of May
Around Bardristane!

I well believe the fair report,
For now in winter all is sweet,
But when the lambkins gaily sport
And dewy gowans busk their feet,
While flies cuckoo from tree to tree,
And summer brings across the sea,
Through such a scene the heart would rove,
Entranced in glamoury of love
To see Bardristane!

Were I a youth, and held by love
As by the bridge is held the keystone,
The rose or lily for my dove,
My treasure trove in this Bardristane,
No happier man could boast of life;
Enriched by such a winsome wife,
Of proudest wish I should be king,
And the brook should of my fortune sing
Adown Bardristane!

Though time and space forbid the thought
That I should ever share such bliss,
Still happy, happy be their lot!
Nor aught of good those maidens miss.
But God in heaven contriving make
Their fortune here, nor e'er forsake,
But give them grace, and life ensure
Of lasting youth that will endure
Beyond Bardristane!

For life, alas! will pass away
Like tender primrose of the spring,
Or lily of a summer day,
Or bird of beauty on the wing.
O what is man? and what is earth
When death stands over life at birth,
Unless the love of God we know?
All seen is but delusive show,
E'en this Bardristane;

LILY.

O SWEET and fair the lily grows
On glassy stream and green busked brae;
There's not a flower the west wind knows
So radiant with the light of day!

Then why so frail this gentle flower
That hastens from the loveliest clime?
The sweetest is the briefest hour,
Where bliss like sleep devoureth time!

There is a Lily that I know,
Of queenly beauty, meek withal,
Red as the rose and pure as snow,
The hearts of men she doth enthrall.

Her eye is of the hazel brown,
A sea that holdeth pearls rare,
Where oft the diver goeth down,
And ventures life to drown his care!

Her lips are of the heather bloom,
Between the cherry and the sloe,
Her breath is like the sweet perfume
That doth o'er purple mountains blow!

O gay and winsome is her way,
The majesty of youth and love,
I see her on the mountains stray,
And hear her in the woodland grove!

I hear her with her sisters two
In many a soft and melting lay,
Like morning tripping o'er the dew
To welcome in the blithesome day!

A threesome reel of song they sing,
And wake the rapture of the heart,
Who lists may deem himself a king
That hears a lyre bids grief depart!

Would Lily stay, and music's charm
But linger in the wistful breeze,
Then sorrow's rage we might disarm,
And banish far beyond the seas!

Her bower is green upon the brae,
That hails the west wind from the Cree,
And hears the murmur night and day
Of streams that seek the Solway sea!

The fields of clover clasp the grove,
Beyond are moors in autumn's glow;
Who thither comes would never rove
If time and fate would bliss allow!

Fair Lily! may thy time be long,
Not as the flower that wears thy name,
Abide in beauty and in song,
With virtue and her spotless fame!

Long may thy voice be full and clear,
And winsome beauty be thy charm,
And Heaven's kindness give thee cheer
Of love will never come to harm!

LINES ON A STILL-BORN CHILD.

What welcome should I give thee, child!
Into this strange and dubious state?
Death sleeps upon thy features mild,
Unfearing life or its debate.

Life once was there when darkness hung
Her curtains round thee in the womb,
But fled ere dawn upon thee sprung,
And now thy cradle is the tomb!

Swift-footed showers of heavy rain
Drove through the morning of thy birth,
And 'tween the blasts the heavens again
Shone glorious o'er the darksome earth!

This lower world was rocked with storms
Of nature, anarchy and war;
And signs of ill, whose awful forms
Eclipsed the day and moon and star!

I would believe, sweet babe unknown,
That God recalled thee to his breast,
To play around his glorious throne,
A Benjamin among the blest!

His elder sons are sent away
To toil on this Egyptian strand,
And in the desert years may stray
Before they reach the Fatherland!

ON THE DEATH OF MY STEED THYME.

My prancing steed is now at rest
Within his mossy bed,
Where he had coursed with waving crest
And sky-erected head.

He carried me o'er hill and moor,
Through dale and bosky glen,
Fleet as the roe, with step as sure
As ever startled Ken.

As moody as the wind, he struck
His purpose quick as thought;
'Gainst hedge and dyke he ran amuck,
And reared with evil fraught.

Nor did he grudge to rush amain
Beneath a lintel stone;
As if the rider he would brain
Upon a treacherous throne.

Hairbreadth escapes start at his name,
And shades of danger dread,
Before the mind advance their claim
On memory's parade.

But now wild Thyme will rear no more,
Nor back into the stream;
Nor fly along with great galore
Like to a wingèd dream!

Yet he became a friend indeed,
Who made dull care begone,
As on we rode by heath and mead,
By wood and mountain throne.

Now he is gone, a loss is mine
May never be repaid;
For years of wingèd health divine
In grave with him are laid!

MAY AND THE NINE RAVENS.

Nine ravens flew about the sun,
As through a cloud he dimly shone,
And circled high as one by one
They coursed around his rising throne.

It was the first of May, and cold,
O'er snow-flecked hills, the breeze did pass;
While sheep and lambs in lowly fold
Found shelter sweet and tender grass.

With lifted head Ken crooned a song,
The night-storm captive in his train,
The while he sped green banks among,
O'er depths and shallows to the main!

The sky was gray, and summer wore
A veil upon her blooming face,
Up through the cloud the lark did soar,
And fain with song would darkness chase!

The tears that Spring herself had wept
The last night she had spent on earth,
The tender grass as pearls kept
Till morn turned sorrow into mirth.

Then maidens came upon the green
And washed their faces in the dew,
That each might shine as beauty's queen,
And find a husband kind and true.

As yonder ravens poise and fly
  Around the shrouded orb of light,
So man and earth await the sky
  To gladden life and cheer the sight!

And as those ravens may not see
  The sun that's soaring through the cloud,
Yet circle round with hopeful glee
  Where light is breaking through the shroud;

So let the human muses nine,
  That feel the darkness as they soar,
Still course around the throne divine
  And Heaven's healing light implore!

PEARL.

O, SHE is young, and she is dear,
  Yea, radiant as the morning,
And pure as is the dew-drop clear,
  The breast of earth adorning!

The sky is blue, e'en so her eye,
  That gleams with starry splendour,
And for her sake escapes the sigh
  From bosoms young and tender!

O why is it that men grow old
  Through spite of Time, the rover,
That they must die ere love has told
  His dream among the clover?

I see the blue-bell on the hill
With July's sun returning,
And hear the lark the welkin fill
With song and rapture burning!

The earth, aye young, and heaven, in prime,
Do live in love together,
For them still grows the sweet, wild thyme
Upon the hills of heather!

Why is it that they live so long,
The life of man so fleeting,
Like to the thrush's morning song
His true love fondly greeting?

Is it that human love intense,
Like pearl small, outvies
A world's wealth, all recompense
Of bliss within the skies?

Away, away! thou foolish thought!
The true is not the seeming,
This life is but a thing of naught,
A sleep suffused with dreaming!

And yet the dream takes glorious form,
As fair as it is fleeting,
Like to the rainbow when the storm
Is from the sun retreating!

And such a dream beguiles me now,
The vision of a maiden,
Her head is crowned with morn, I trow,
Her form a passing Eden!

She wears the blue bell on her breast,
The daisy and the pansy ;
They lovely are, and also blest,
If aught they have of fancy.

She wanders by the river's side
To view the pools and shallows,
And see the trout through crystal glide
As swift and gay as swallows !

She gazes on the deep, dark linn,
Where pilgrim salmon rest them,
And at the fall she hears the din
Of thunder would arrest them.

But waters in their anger stern
Can not resist the living
That upward press, and still would learn
What can be got by striving.

Away she flies to clover brae,
To wild thyme and the heather,
A fleeting form that may not stay,
No art of man can tether !

Among the buttercups she glides,
The queen of all the meadow,
And tastes the well that coyly hides
Beneath the golden shadow !

O happy well, that knows her lips,
Her image in its bosom !
Away she hies and gladness sips
From everything that's lo'esome !

Go on thy way, sweet maiden, pure!
Thy God thee ever guiding,
His light the guide of footsteps sure,
His love thy bliss abiding!

— —

IN MEMORY OF MARGARET HALL.

Another friend is gone, a friend how rare!
Her grave is open in the treacherous green,
And death remorseless, love nor worth may spare,
But digs his pit within this April scene!

The well was wont the traveller to greet,
And quench his thirst along the dusty way,
As on he journeyed in the broiling heat,
In some dark cave at last has gone astray.

No more it sparkles in the face of morn,
Nor shows the gleam of life amid the flowers;
To earth's deep heart its sighing waves are borne,
Afar from day's bright realms and summer bowers!

So thou art gone, the sparkle of whose eye
Was as the wave of Hippocrene * at dawn,
Where love and laughter linked with wisdom high
Go forth in song adown Mount Helicon!

* Hippocrene, a fountain in Mount Helicon, Bœotia, Greece, sacred to the Muses. It is said to have been produced by the horse Pegasus, by striking the ground with his feet.

For, from the height of youth and beauty clad,
  Thy stream came bounding on in rainbow spray,
With many a leap and warble making glad
  The pilgrims toiling up the arduous way.

Then ran thy current in a darksome glen,
  A channel hollowed in the flinty stone,
Where toiled thy waves out through the gloomy den,
  And travelled eerie through the night alone.

Though narrow was the path, both rough and hard,
  The warble of thy voice was sweet and strong,
And journeyed on like some heroic bard
  Who draws from grief occasion for a song.

Thy wave we followed through the canon stern,
  Till lost aneath death's bridge in mirk profound,
Then stood and pondered, as full fain to learn
  Where flowed thy stream beyond the underground.

But now in light thy crystal waters roam,
  Through fields of spring where haunts the cuckoo's song,
That speaks of summer there, and aye to come,
  The dells and hills of Paradise among!

So she has passed from all on earth we know,
  The years of youth and beauty, blithe and gay,
The term of sickness, pain, and weary woe,
  The Arctic night that follows up the day!

To dwell with Him who saved her by His grace,
  Imparting strength to drink the cup He gave;
And now she sees the vision of His face
  In life beyond the limit of the grave!

Fill in the earth above her sleeping frame,
And spread the sod upon her lowly bed;
That grass and flowers may bloom, a pleasing fame,
And fragrant memory of the blessed dead!

A LETTER TO MR. THOMAS MURRAY, MOORBROCK.*

All hail! dear Murray of Moorbrock!
Thou dweller by Poltye,
That wimples down among the flock,
And warbles to the sky.

I hear thy voice upon the moor,
Song freighted with good cheer,
That tells me friendship may endure
Throughout life's changeful year.

If absent from your roof for long,
It was not my intent;
For fain would I have sped along
To Moorbrock o'er the bent.

The weather, wild, things unforeseen,
Stern powers of aspect dire,
Spring up at once and intervene
Between us and desire.

* Author of *Frae the Heather: Poems and Songs.* Brechin: D. H. Edwards.

For had the plan that is divine,
And over all supreme,
Run parallel with that of mine,
And filled my empty scheme,

Then had I gone against the wind
That cometh down the Ken,
All sure at last my wish to find
With thee in "the wild lone glen."

For song and music in the past,
And wisdom's voice I've heard,
Where roves the wild, untutored blast
O'er the roof of Moorbrock's bard.

And hope still pictures to my mind
A fair arrayed to-morrow,
When pleasure past, I yet may find
Come back o'er fields of sorrow!

And though the foot that walks the sod,
And ranges through the heather
That busks this earth, may bear a load
Of grief and joy together,

Yet, like a pilgrim, he may rest
Life's burden on the brae,
And on Moorbrock's steep, daring crest,
List what the waters say.

And should they murmur in their song,
Or of the path complain,
The lark will rise and heaven throng
With an exulting strain.

For He who sits and reigns on high,
And cares for all below,
And gave His Son for us to die,
Shall surely good bestow!

With loyal faith then may we bow
To what our God ordains,
And in good time we yet shall know
Why life on earth has pains.

But I must haste this tedious pen
Before the year be old,
To wish you joy in "the wild lone glen,"
And safety in the fold!

Good health to Tom, and happiness,
And eke to Mrs. Murray;
The best be theirs that they can guess,
Sure, though it may not hurry.

May Andrew's right hand never lose
Youth's early skill, as when
From barrel staves he waked the Muse
Of music, swaying men.

His knife of skill ingenious made
Of tar-stained wood a fiddle,
A feat with Samson's might be laid,
His lion slain and riddle.

From lion slain did Samson take
The honey from the strong,
And from dead wood did Andrew wake
The living mate of song.

And Jessie, now a strapping lass,
Both handsome, tight, and fair,
Whose step is light upon the grass,
Free as a bird of air,

Long may she answer Andrew's hand,
And swell the dual strain,
Where harmony has full command,
And sways as one the twain!

If otherwise, then may she find
A sweetheart, leal and true,
Who then may boast of womankind
The daffodil in dew!

When Spring is in the field and song,
The primrose on the brae,
And curlews on the moor prolong
The dream of love's young day.

And may the Muse that dwells with you,
As she has dwelt for long,
Still on your head bestow the dew
That grows the flower of song!

With thee and thine may peace abide,
Nor any evil scathe her;
But blessing come with every tide,
Is the wish of Jamie Mather!

THE END IS NOT YET.

The pearl forms within a growing shell,
Where yet untouched by diver's hand it sleeps,
And dreams within the abyss of sighing waves.
The bank whereon it dwells is known to Him
Who placed it there at first, deep set in sea;
And when the tides of days and years have beat
Around its lonely tent, in darkness dense,
A servant of God's will, the diver death
Will gather up a pearl, rich and rare,
From darkest night, to shine in brightest day.

IN MEMORY OF JANET BARBOUR, STROANCASTLE,

Who Died at Stranraer, 14th January, 1894.

As oft I pass Stroancastle home,
Beneath the bracken-busked brae,
Where, at their leisure, cattle roam,
And on the heath the lambkins play,

I think of one who once lived there
Her kind are few beneath the sun
From youth to age her face was fair,
With goodness true all hearts she won.

Her lips spoke truth, her hands were fraught
With deeds of toil from morn to eve:
The sons of want ne'er came for naught;
They went rejoiced who late did grieve.

Some Martha praise, some Mary prize;
Let both combine to sing her worth!
A fragrance that ascends the skies,
A sweetness that o'erspreads the earth.

She sat at Jesus' feet, and learned
In love unselfish still to grow,
As day by day her hands they earned
The tribute grateful hearts bestow.

Upon Stroancastle's dimpled brae,
When corn is ripe and rowans red,
The eye beholds a rare display—
A crown of gold on Autumn's head.

Such was her life, becrowned with gold,
The fruits of Autumn, deeds of love;
And her reward, to earth untold,
She evermore enjoys above.

O! they have been in many a mart,
And haunted oft a pleasant harbour,
Who ever knew as kind a heart
And bounteous hand as Jenny Barbour!

THE JUBILEE.

Shine forth, thou crimson dawn!
Upon thy flame-lit throne
Of marled cloud appear!
For tidings glad are thine
To broken men who pine
And shed the bitter tear.

For forty years and nine
Have passed across the line
  Of day and present time
Into the cloudy past—
An ocean dim and vast,
  A weird and ghostly clime,

Where burdens, griefs, and fears,
Upon those scape-goat years,
  Have found the wilderness;
Nor evermore come back
The weary heart to rack
  With throbs of new distress.

A host! they come from far,
The wounded in life's war;
  With halt, and scar, and groan,
They see thy face, O dawn!
Their sorrows all are gone;
  No murmur now, nor moan.

To Gilead they haste;
Behind, the dreary waste
  Of poortith's cruel sway;
To healing balm and flowers,
To fig and olive bowers,
  And freedom's festive day.

Ye slaves, her laurels seize!
And on the morning breeze
  Lift up your heart and voice!
Away your burdens throw,
Your chains and years of woe!
  Before your Lord rejoice!

The trumpet peals on high,
While echo lifts the cry
From Dan to Beersheba.
On Hermon's dewy breast
The eagle, in her nest,
Responds to Heaven's law;

With brood beneath her wing,
Her heart doth proudly sing
O'er eaglets living all:
So Israel's sons come home,
Who far and faint did roam,
At Heaven's loving call.

These sons of Israël,
Oh how their bosoms swell!
As they from devious ways
Regain the heritage
Which did their youth engage,
Ere they knew evil days.

The mountaineer behold!
Who drinks the waters cold
That rise in Engedi,
And climbs the rugged steep,
Where bounding wild goats leap,
His own what he doth spy.

The stooping pilgrim gray,
On Hebron height this day,
Doth hail his kith and kin;
And though of Caleb's stock,
His hard career did mock
A noble origin.

For he a slave has been,
And evil years hath seen,
  Far from the upper springs
Of blessing from on high;
Nor nether springs were nigh,
  Of aught whereof earth sings.

But now he drinks his fill,
Forgets the days of ill
  At Achsah's crystal springs;
Reclaims his fathers' lands
Were wrenched from giants' hands,
  The feat of faith's great kings.

With travelled step and slow,
As one who walks on snow,
  Across the desert drear
The younger son returns,
Whose heart within him burns,
  As homeward he doth bear.

At sight of Jordan's wave,
When floods the valley lave,
  No double thoughts detain;
He wades up to the chin,
Then swims the boiling linn
  Till he the bank attain.

He climbs the hill with haste,
Behind he deems all waste,
  The garden as the sand;
E'en fair Jerusalem
Is naught to Bethlehem,
  His own, his fathers' land!

Though sprung from David, king,
Of place he may not sing,
Or wealth, or title great:
An exile he has been,
The prey of fortune's spleen,
The sport of bitter fate.

Forsooth he was to blame
For tarnishing the fame
Of royalty and worth;
Through riot wild and sloth,
He earns a lot uncouth
That mocks his royal birth.

But Heaven's grace is great,
Restores our fallen state
With mercy's royal gift;
He drinks at Bethlehem's well,
Nor angels may they tell
What joys his heart uplift!

The pilgrims spread abroad,
Each takes the straightest road
To reach his own estate.
From offerings to God,
Peace offerings, they load
The board with festal freight.

The fatted calf they kill,
And cot and palace thrill
With strains of music rare;
From hearts that late did weep,
Thrust down the giddy steep
Rush legions of despair.

Ye silver trumpets sound!
From race and dancing bound
The lame cannot refrain;
For slaves made free to-day,
And stooping pilgrims gray,
With joy made young again.

SPRING UP, O WELL!

(Numbers xxi. 17.)

O nation fortunate and blest
Whom trouble welds to one accord!
When men, by various ills opprest,
With heart agree to seek the Lord:
As when the chiefs of Israël,
With staves, did toil beneath the spell
Of harmony, till waters sprang
In answer as they digged and sang
Spring up, O well!

The rocks that Moses struck are hid
And lost in time and distance far;
The days are gone wherein they chid,
And, striving, cursed their evil star.
But other times of thirst appear,
Bleak days that blanche the passing year,
As on they wend o'er burning sand,
And pray, while roaming through the land,
Spring up, O well!

If for the well in heart ye pray,
  Ye princes gather round and toil!
Each man his staff ply as he may,
  And wrest from earth her crystal spoil:
For this is heaven's decree to-day,
That ye must labour while ye pray;
Scoop out the sand with busy staff,
At eventide then sing and laugh,
    Spring up, O well!

The tribes they halt and camp around,
  Young men and strong, and maidens fair;
The old and frail salute the ground,
  Outstretched on couches hot and bare.
Ten thousand thousand souls are there,
Whose voices charge the noonday air
With curses deep and murmurs high,
And lips, blasphemous, question why
    There springs no well!

With heart and soul the princes dig,
  Though staves are spades for work unfit;
With potent fruit their toil is big
  Who straight obey what God has writ.
Up through the sand the waters rise,
The crystal spray ascends the skies,
And as the stream flows strong and clear,
They sing aloud with hearts of cheer,
    Spring up, O well!

As through the camp the stream doth flow,
  A silver messenger of joy,
Tribes gather round, and, stooping low,
  Drink deep and long their thirst to cloy.

So with the pebble from the brook,
Yea, of thy lot, the very crook,
The rod, or staff within thy hand,
If thou obey thy Lord's command,
Up springs the well!

O men! who dwell apart from God,
Who spurn his grace, ye straying are
Into a desert drear and broad,
Where shines nor sun, nor moon, nor star,
A treeless waste unknown to Spring,
To Noah's dove, or swallow's wing:
Retrace your steps; return, return!
And leave behind the sands that burn,
Where springs no well!

But journey to the land that lies
Within the radiance of the sun;
A goodly land, report the spies,
Where streams of living water run,
Whereof the poet proudly sings
The folk therein are princes, kings,
And life and joy within that realm
Nor time nor chance can overwhelm:
There springs the well!

O Son of God, Immanuel!
The source of grace and truth, I wis;
Who comes to Thee drinks at the well
Whose wave imparts immortal bliss.
Incline our hearts to watch and pray,
And toil in faith from day to day,
That we, with all the tribes of Heaven,
May sing for joy that Thou hast given,
Spring up, O well!

IN MEMORY OF QUEEN VICTORIA.

WHO DIED 22ND JANUARY, 1901.

AND she has passed away whose reign was long,
And fraught with goodness four and sixty years;
Illustrious Queen! amid the royal throng
Of sovereigns wise, who earned their nations' tears
When they went down to death.

Far, far her sway in regions east and west,
The treasures of the sun and winter cloud,
The realms fair where summer takes her rest,
And mountains clad with snow where winds blow loud,
Beneath her sceptre lay.

She raised it up on high, a pennon fair,
While peoples hailed her rule with glad acclaim;
Her royal actions thrilled the listening air,
That carried round the world her pleasant fame,
Like breeze o'er beds of thyme.

When softly death unclasped her faithful hand,
As fell the golden sceptre to the earth,
Its fall, as muffled thunder on the strand,
In cot and palace hushed the games of mirth
With silent awe of heaven.

The Himalayan woods, and virgin snows
That haunt the sky above the driving cloud,
From whose deep bosom many a river flows
Majestic, wild and strong, careering proud
Through gorge and wavy plain;

The land of Nile, mysterious and great,
Whose river hails from mountains of the moon,
Historic, old, and dwells in lonely state,
Whose pyramids enjoy eternal noon,
The wreath of fadeless fame;

The sons Æthiop in the sultry west,
The Coast of Gold, Dahomey, Calabar,
Nyassa's tribes, no more with woe o'erprest,
Nor blind to peace and glory passing war,
New born to Christian sway;

The many tribes spread o'er the southern land,
The Zulu stout, the stalwart, dusky Kaffir,
Where war prevails, and with his flaming brand
Lays bare the dust of gold and gems of Ophir,
A deadly lure of hearts!

Canadian plains of treasured, virgin soil,
Her forests old that wear primeval hoar
Of dateless time, ere man's destructive toil
Assailed their boughs with axe and fire's uproar,
Her lakes, sequestered seas;

Australia's hidden breast, far, deep, unknown,
Her borders wide enriched with sheep and gold,
Her orchards great that deck her ample zone
With luscious fruits, yea, treasure-trove untold,
That bides a time to come;

New Zealand's Isles, where winds Antarctic blow,
Her lakes and terrace-work of beauty rare,
Her geyser springs, green vales, and hills of snow,
With rushing streams through summer's garden fair,
Beneath high winter's frost;

Fair Erin's Isle, whose grass is ever green,
Whose bogs are dark, but hearts are warm and brave,
Where wit and song aye wear a native sheen,
A phosphor gleam upon the nightling wave,
Or glow-worm in the dark ;

The land of England, studded thick with men,
Where forges fierce belch forth their fire and smoke,
With wood and plain, high tower and misty fen,
The sated kine, the shepherd's fleecy flock
Graze wide and chew the cud ;

And Caledonia, the sacred shrine
Of law and freedom, hearts both leal and true,
Where, 'mid Balmoral woods of oak and pine,
Victoria hailed the hills where autumn threw
Her gorgeous purple robe-

All felt the shade and shock of sudden death,
As some fair moon that rode the heavens high,
With galaxies of stars upon her path,
Goes down, and leaves behind a vacant sky,
Her maiden stars in cloud !

A wife and widow constant in her love,
A mother true, affectionate, and wise,
A fruitful vine that o'er the wall doth rove,
With branches wide and growing to the skies.
O rich her freight of life !

But, as her joys, the griefs of life were great,
Where many poignant darts passed through love's bowers ;

Where blooms the rose, sharp thorns are there to mate
The perfume sweet and glory of the flower,
Fell envy's glance to quell.

A Queen she was who ruled with potent grace,
The style of worth, the dignity of truth,
Who ever knew and filled the royal place
Of sway o'er nations, with a heart of ruth,
Whose deeds for ever live!

Beloved, lamented Queen! sweet be thy sleep
In Windsor's woodland shade where Thames flows soft!
Though low thy grave, for thee we may not weep,
Whose soul, we trust, is now enthroned aloft
With those who have o'ercome!

IN MEMORY OF THE REVD. WILLIAM WATSON,

United Presbyterian Minister, Kirkcudbright, Who Died on Sabbath, 7th October, 1894.

O! what on earth abiding hath of all
That men deem virtuous, and fain would hold?
Where change doth rule and turns the sweet to gall,
And iron gray succeeds the age of gold.

O, irony of fate! thy winter breath
Blows hard on life's fair field, and steals away
The friends of youth like some black frost, whose scaith
Doth blight the garden bloom with swift decay.

And here a friend, the bravest of the brave,
Of crystal thought, affection warm and free,
Sleeps day and night the slumber of the grave,
Above the surges of the tidal Dee.

In yonder church, inspired, he spoke the Word
From lips baptized with love and sacred fire,
As one who knew the burden of the Lord,
And unto Heaven's will did aye aspire.

Ingenuous, loving soul, sincere, upright,
The man who knew thee knew reality,
A saint who lived as ever in God's sight,
And heard the voices of eternity!

When first I knew thee youth was on thy brow,
With auburn curls round its ample space;
Thy keen, blue eye would eager glances throw,
And radiate with thought a beaming face.

The firm-set lip and well definèd chin,
The quick and certain step the man bespoke,
Who swithered not, but took one way to win
The crown of life, nor grudged to climb the rock.

His ardent soul, to Heaven's voice attent,
Would hear its whisper clear above the wrath
Of Babel's madding crowd, nor could be bent
Aside by smile or frown from duty's path.

In student days when first we tried to preach,
And from the pulpit spoke as best we might
The message conned by heart, and sought to reach
The congregation's ear and watchful sight,

We went to Biggar town, by fame well sung,
And spoke on Missions to our seniors wise,
Who sat beneath Dunlop's instructive tongue,
That brought to light the depths of prophecies.

On Monday morn we sped across the Clyde,
And on the skirt of Tinto's mantle walked,
The scent of heather-bloom spread far and wide,
While youth on lore and nature mused and talked.

At Hyndford bridge, where Clyde is clear and strong,
Ere yet his waters know the grinding linn,
We parted there, nor met again for long,
While years ran out their course of peace and din.

He journeyed westward to his cradle-land,
Where sleep the Douglas lords in vaults of gloom,
Who in their day did wield a conquering brand,
By princes envied till they reached the tomb.

But when my friend returned he walked the sod,
In Winraw wood inhaled the fir-fraught air,
Enjoyed the cup of love and thanked his God,
As Joseph in his coat of colour fair!

Years passed anon, and soon he found his field,
Wherein he laboured seasons dark and bright,
Between the braes of Borgue that honey yield,
And Rerrick's cliffs that face the Solway's might.

With faithful zeal full many a harvest day,
Upon the banks of Dee where proud waves boil,
He gathered golden sheaves, and more than play
Could e'er beget, the joy he found in toil.

Meanwhile my tent was pitched upon the Clyde,
Before Dumbarton Rock across the wave,
Where day and night doth pass the restless tide,
And with its troubled foam the bank doth lave.

When years had come and gone twice seven and three,
Since first my friend life's great task had begun,
Within St. Cuthbert's town by tidal Dee,
I journeyed south to where Ken's waters run.

As Muses Nine so many years I went
Adown the Tarf to Dee from time to time;
And precious hours of fellowship we spent,
Like pilgrims pausing on the mount they climb.

Then as we breathed we turned a pensive gaze
Upon the deep that memory did illume,
As labouring moon, where trembling ghosts of days
Creep ever round her from oblivion's gloom!

Anon we looked above on heights untrod,
And saw the cloud on crag, green brae, and well,
But yet illumèd with the smile of God,
The morn of bliss to come no tongue can tell!

Ah! little did we think the Pisgah height
On which my friend should sit was then so near,
And he so soon should hail the true day-break
On Canaan's fields, himself arrivèd there!

Thus did he pass at early afternoon,
When heaven's light strikes warmest on the earth,
When bees amid the blooming heather croon,
And gather honey from the hives of mirth.

His soul was young, and on his branch the dew
Of tender love distilled on every leaf,
Whose wife and children and whose people knew
The throbbing heart that felt for others' grief!

Across the fields that face the Solway wave,
We walked at leisure on a summer day,
And strolled the shore where blind waves searched each cave,
By cliff and gravel beach of fair Balmae.

And now the voices of the sea he knows,
Who lately stood upon the troubled sand,
By tides forever vexed, the nameless woes
Of prisoned ocean striving for the land!

Nay, better far! his bark has sailed away,
Beyond the restless and the wrecking flood,
While now from Ararat he views the day,
A world new where grows the olive wood!

The fragrance of his name will haunt for long
St. Cuthbert's town, where oft our footsteps sped
By Castle-dykes and up the woods among,
That crown and guard the city of the dead.

Nor can I e'er forget our final walk,
As round the ramparts of the town we went,
When nature's beauty strayed into our talk,
While shone the sun on grove and moorland bent.

No fairer scene we saw that day, or trod,
Than God's green acre on the silent brae,
Where many pilgrims have laid down the load
Of weary flesh, to wait the judgment day!

Such was our walk beneath that July sun,
Was warm and bright and shone on wild-rose bloom;
Unwitting we his course so near was run,
And that October's light should gild his tomb!

With him and his we parted at the door,
Our last meal taken at the kindly board,
To see his face again, ah, nevermore!
While death with iron hand holds fast his hoard!

But though death reigns, his end is drawing near,
The grave shall yield his treasure to the sun,
When they who sleep in Christ will rise to wear
The crown of glory faith had sought and won!

Then sleep, my friend, the slumber of the blest!
The fragrance of thy name is spread abroad,
Thy wife and offspring bright have Heaven's best,
The husbandhood and fatherhood of God!

DUNSKEY GLEN.

In Dunskey glen, a summer afternoon,
Some golden hours I spent in glorious June,
Above where sea waves roam;
And saw in distance dim fair Erin lie,
Beyond the ships, beneath the azure sky,
A dream of time to come.

The hyacinth and hawthorn bloomed around,
In brake and wood, o'er cliff, in hollow ground,
And on the crag's gray face.
The sea-pink blushed above the nearing wave,
That lapped the shore, and murmured in the cave
Where foam-bells blindly chase.

And ever and anon the cuckoo's strain
On westland breeze arose, a rare refrain!
A song though often heard,
Still pulses through the soul forever new,
Oh, dream of hope! wert thou as often true!
How great our debt, O bard!

Within this Dunskey glen how green thy bower!
With fragrance sweet, and busked with many a flower
Of this enchanting June.
Sure thou at least hast found a lovely home,
And little cause in other lands to roam
With thy spell-binding rune!

Ah! vain content with June and Dunskey glen!
Thy bower will fade as bowers of mortal men
On this side time and death!
And thus with wistful eyes we fondly hail
The dim, blue land beyond the wandering sail,
That waits on heaven's breath!

Oh, sea of glass! of green and sapphire hue,
How fair thy face! reflecting heaven's blue
And yonder orb of day!
Whose smile irradiates the waste and deep,
And gilds the bowers of mermaids in their sleep,
Where tides with tresses play!

Within thy arms fair Erin sleeping lies,
Her meads of green and gold 'neath sunny skies.
And clear her sparkling streams;
Where hearts are warm and strong and throb with love,
As this sweet minstrel of the summer grove
Who makes the bliss of dreams!

And yet were I to sail and reach the strand,
Explore each dell, and roam the mountain-land
Of Erin blithe and fair;
From cliffs of Donegal to Kerry green,
The eye might feast on many a lovely scene,
Yet would not linger there!

On Galway Bay the diamond gleam of noon,
Or golden glow of westering sun in June
On islets of the blest,
Would bid me haste afar to realms beyond,
Fair Florida, in sun and groves profound,
The red man's eerie rest!

Then, on the Rocky Mountains great and high,
Whose rugged peaks transpierce the bending sky,
Aglow with gems of gold,
Fair California's bowers of wonder-land
Would draw me on until I reached the strand,
And sailed for India old!

In vain the circling quest whose Westward Ho
Regains the East, where waves of Ganges flow
Through fens where tigers prowl;
Where man is poor although the land be gold,
And seas be paved with pearls, wealth untold,
And wild hyenas howl!

No paradise on earth can e'er be found,
No vision fair, and no transporting sound
Of music from the grove,
If faileth Dunskey glen to charm the eye,
Or thrill the soul with song that cannot die
While throbs the heart of love!

But if we would true Eldorado find,
We may not course the earth, nor seek to bind
The heart to passing show,
But set the sails for heaven, and reach the rest
Of those who dwell with God, forever blest,
While ages come and go!

ON MY STEED, FANCY.

Oh, soft and low thy bed, my charger gray!
Thy rest in downy loam, afar from day,
The realm of life and breath!
Where warbles Ken among the pebbles round,
Or stills his voice in dusky linn, profound
As thy long sleep and death!

Fair May arrays the fields in vesture new,
Flowers deck the meads and stars the welkin blue;
Ken lifts or droops his crest
'Neath dying wind or stormy thunder rain,
And all above the ground doth wax or wane,
But toucheth not thy rest!

Where late the brown earth on thy bosom lay,
The corncraik's note, deceptive, leads astray
The roaming, truant lad,
Who seeks in vain her ambush sly to view,
As forth he wades, besoaked with summer dew,
With sight and song made glad.

Thy grave is hid beneath a mantle green,
While through the air there floats a charm unseen,
The cuckoo's lonely song!
That haunts the brae above Glenlee's fair bower,
And strikes with sovereign will the summer hour
Man's heart would fain prolong!

Though earth has wrapped thee round and hid thy place,
That of thy grave no eye may see a trace,
Thy name is written here!
Thy form of beauty, strength, and winning grace,
Thy foot so fleet, the swiftest in the chase,
Thine eye of sunlight clear!

Thy name was Fancy, and such like thy heart,
So bold and free, audacious in thy art,
Yet faithful to obey!
And hadst thou been a charger of the Sun,
Thy wonted loyal course thou would'st have run
When Phaethon led the day!

At Waterloo no charger of the Greys
Had braver been, more worthy of the bays,
Than thou, my Fancy bold!
But now thou sleepest in the dust of death,
While all of thee on Memory's misty heath
A phantom is, and cold!

Sleep sound, my steed! among the loved and lost,
No more by fiery trouble scorched and tost,
Like that which bore thee off!
And if thou hast a share in the hereafter,
Then scour the meads in some gay summer quarter,
Afar from want or scoff!

WEATHER SIGNS.

When round the moon a circle wide is seen,
A fleece of mist partakes of gray and gold,
That veils her pallid face and starry sheen,
A storm is near will try the sailor bold.
Draw in the sails, or make for shelter nigh!
He rides the wave who doth observe the sky.

What morn the clouds of mist the mountain climb,
And pine and thin away as they ascend,
While gleams the flowery plain with dewy rime,
A sunny, summer day these signs portend;
For then, they say, the shepherds of the sky
Hang out their plaids beneath the sun to dry.

When dawn shows flaring red, consumptive bloom
Upon the hectic cheek, forecasts a change;
A dimness gathers on the mount, and gloom
Of clouds that cap and then descend the range;
A storm of rain and sleet eclipseth soon
Dawn's promise fair ere day hath reached high noon.

If on a summer morn there be no dew,
  Then earth expects the rain, another boon
From heaven's bounteous hand, befitting, true,
  As day hath sun and night may boast the moon,
So let us wait on God! whose sway benign,
For all his folk will what is good assign.

When day is clear to eve from early morn,
  A cloudless sky, earth decked with green and gold,
The grassy vale, red heath, and yellow corn,
  The web of gossamer on mead and wold
Proclaims the day a pet, let hope not borrow!
For storms in ambush now will roar to-morrow.

When wind is from the west and carries cloud,
  The rainbow span athwart its bosom dark,
Ye shepherds! then beware the tempest loud,
  And bucht your sheep as in a sheltering ark!
Although the bow of morn a storm predicts,
For those prepared it never harm inflicts.

But when the sun descends into the west,
  And on the cloud that travels to the east
The rainbow fair is painted on its breast,
  Then let the sailor lad enjoy his feast!
That storm is gone, a broken, routed blast,
While tranquil light upon the wave is cast.

But let these signs foretell days dark or fair,
  A season halcyon, or tempests roar!
For him who sails with Christ all portents bear
  His ship across the sea to heaven's shore.
Grant, Lord, Thy presence! and still lead me on
To Thy abode, the rainbow round the throne!

IN MEMORY OF MRS. ROBERT BROWN, CARSPHAIRN,

WHO DIED ON SABBATH, AT NOON, 5TH FEBRUARY, 1899.

Long length at last the ship doth homeward sail
From tedious delay, more dread than gale,
The Saragossan calm *
Of tideless seas, where trade-winds never blow,
But serpents breed, and sharks, and nameless woe.
The mariner's alarm!

Now home she comes with pearls from the deep,
The gold of Ophir, and the gems that keep
Day's flashing lustre bright
Within their heart, and shine in cavern gloom,
A glow-worm radiance that doth illume
The Ethiop breast of night!

Like such a ship, our friend has reached the strand
Of that fair realm, the heavenly fatherland
Of those on God who wait;
Who, baffled long, in faith still persevere,
And follow Christ in times adverse, austere,
And thus o'ercome their fate!

With meek and cheerful heart she bore each day
Affliction's doom, might forecast well dismay,
Had she beheld afar,
The train of sable years that were to come
And pitch their tents of gloom around her home,
Eclipsing sun and star!

* The Saragossa Sea is a realm of water in the Tropics that is seldom disturbed by wind or wave.

Full many years ago her husband died :
A man upright, beloved, to heaven allied,
For whom to live was Christ ;
And in the footsteps of his faith she trod
With gentle courage, rare, a weary road,
Resolved to keep her tryst.

Between the hearthstone and the bed she spent
The dim grey years with smiling, sweet content,
Nor grieved the lack of sun,
Or days of spring and summer on the fells,
Or survey fair by Cairnsmore's Golden Wells,
Where sparkling waters run !

Though grand the view on Cairnsmore's hoary crest.
From dawn, and Lochinvar to Ailsa, west,
And Arran's mountain wraith ;
Where rolls the western day upon the peaks,
A golden wave that on their purple breaks
Like glory touching death !

Yet fairer far the scene she saw and shared,
When through the gate of spring and death she fared
A happy, Sabbath day !
And bade farewell to kindred and to earth,
And sorrow's dell, henceforth to dwell with mirth,
Where life is blest for aye !

Oh, Thou whose presence was her Holy Place !
Whose love within her soul illumed her face
With cheer and fortitude,
Be with her sons and daughters left behind,
Who were to her a stay and comfort kind,
And by her faithful stood !

Within the gravel bosom of the holm,
Where rests the pebbled sand was wont to roam,
Her frame finds sure repose,
While Deugh curves round by braes of Garryhorn,
And, turning eastward, seeks the face of morn
'Mong moors where heather blows.

Sweet be thy sleep while Deugh sings night and day,
While sits the cloud, or shafts of sunshine play
On Cairnsmore's lofty throne!
The hour draws near when thou shalt hear the voice
At which the saints shall wake and heaven rejoice,
When Christ recalls His own!

THE MOUNT OF KILVEY.

Upon a fair September day,
I saw the ships in Swansea Bay,
And eke the hill,
Where day and night together stay,
And life and death are at the play
To heal and kill.

'Twas not the sea that caught mine eye,
Nor azure of the arching sky,
But strange Kilvey,
That, Janus-like, looked east and west,
With gloomy curse and blessing drest,
Both sad and gay.

Upon the side that faced the bay
The golden corn waved on the brae
Its welcome sweet;
Upon the other side it bore
Nor grass nor grain, nor any flower
For summer meet.

Naught but a cloud of mineral smoke,
To robe the brown earth and the rock,
By man undone!
Where spring ne'er warbles at the dawn,
Nor summer weaves the grassy lawn
Before the sun.

Whence came the blight upon the hill
That every sign of life doth kill
On side the east?
The works of copper, oil, and tin,
Of steel and coal, where labour's din
Makes Mammon's feast.

The treasures torn from mother earth
With travail sore, attain to birth
Through bitter fire;
The smoke ascends upon Kilvey,
And hovers there, despising day,
A shadow dire!

With scum of metals laden full
The Tawè toils, a stream of dool,
In vitriol dye;
As on it flows in channel red,
A Styx in kingdom of the dead,
Unknown to sky.

It skirts the foot of Mount Kilvey,
Its vapour rising on the brae
Blights all around ;
In vain appears the morning light,
'Tis married to eternal night,
Things underground.

Thus dark and barren is the hill,
Encompassèd by powers that kill,
Fell Mammon's breath !
That withers many a garden fair,
And radiant mount of promise rare
With blasts of death !

But still Kilvey doth summer know,
When on its breast the west winds blow
With loving strife,
And bid its arms together hold
The harvest ripening into gold,
As if for life !

It basks within the westering ray
Of sun that speedeth far away
Across the deep,
With tender care waits on each flower,
And weeps betimes the gloaming hour
Of death and sleep.

Thus Kilvey spoke in under-tune :—
My morn is lost, and also noon,
Upon this gloom,
That like a nightmare grim and dread
Holds half my being with the dead,
In dingy tomb.

In years gone by my day was long,
All round my skirts I heard the song
Of minstrel sweet;
The mavis at the dawn of day,
The merle in the gloaming gray,
My joy complete.

My landward view is darkened now,
The clouds of care and toil, I trow,
Have blasted me.
For me the earth no more is green,
Nor hope may linger on the scene,
Save on the sea.

Where to mine eye the sun shines clear,
And whence the winds that bless me here
With harvest joy,
Though man may shut me out from earth,
Withdraw the dew and nature's mirth,
And bloom destroy!

Tied to the stake I linger here,
Perpetual smoke and fire to bear
Around my feet;
While round my shoulders and my head
Grim lower the shadows of the dead,
And no retreat.

Still, heaven is kind, whose open door
Sheds light upon my western shore,
And cheereth me
With radiance of an afternoon,
And breezes in the month of June,
That hail from sea.

Is this Kilvey whose voice I hear?
Or human soil whose meagre year
Laments the past,
Yet looks to heaven and findeth there
A sunshine that defies despair
And hell's foul blast?

Whose eye beholds the ocean wide,
And ear doth hear the rushing tide
Of years to come,
And doth not fear the loss of earth,
Since death will prove another birth
To bring him home!

Hold up thy head, thou Mount Kilvey!
The cloud will vanish from thy day,
And thou shalt stand
With spring and summer round thy feet,
While heaven's smile thy breast will greet
With breezes bland.

FIRE.

Awake in bed I lay and vainly sought
The sweet unconsciousness that sleep bestows,
While shadows ever came provoking thought,
As breezes ripple on the stream that flows.

The memories of the past, the dread and dear,
The misty portraits of the coming day,
The phantasies of hope and gloomy fear
Come crowding on in mingled disarray.

At length a sudden cry of "Fire!" arose,
A rush of wheels and beating hoofs of steeds,
That broke the city's brief and thin repose,
And scattered all the dreams that slumber breeds.

And as a web that on a dewy morn
Its airy texture hangs upon the grass,
Doth quickly perish, by the breezes torn,
As piping shrill they o'er the meadows pass;

So sped my waking dreams at Fire's shrill call,
As airy nothings that had never been,
Or, as the mists that on the mountains fall,
Evanish from the sun's bright glowing sheen.

Thou dreadful fire, that burns and will not spare
The wood and stubble and the hemp of life,
The field of dreams and falsehood making bare,
And brushwood low, with snakes and vermin rife,

At thought of thee I would be wisdom taught,
Nor be ensnared by fancies false and vain,
That stalk the earth with all deception fraught,
The flower of pleasure and the fruit of pain!

TO A. M.

On Grennan's bonnie, dimpled brae,
Where oaks their shadows throw,
The mavis poured his rapturous lay
Into the mead below.

The air was keen, the fields were gray,
The mountains white with snow,
The minstrel poured his melting lay
From an oak-tree's topmost bough.

The wild ducks startled from a spring
That haunts the river Ken,
Together rose with labouring wing,
And flew o'er moor and fen.

And doubtless other springs they sought
And found around Loch Dee,
In Buchan wilds with fountains fraught
That gush forth clear and free.

Afar to west away they flew,
Against the sharp March wind,
O'er mountains wild, 'neath heaven's blue
The gray east left behind.

And when we must forsake our spring,
That haunts this world's vale,
And bid adieu to birds that sing
Between the rain and hail;

Nor hear again the murmur soft
Of Ken that floweth by,
May it be ours to soar aloft,
And fairer worlds descry!

A SHEET OF MIST ON CAIRNSMORE-OF-FLEET IN AUTUMN.

A SHEET of mist as white as snow,
And still as wreath high mountains know,
'Neath winter's power,
Doth brood at rest on Cairnsmore's Seat,
Above the springs that nurse the Fleet,
This autumn hour.

A fair September day is past,
The mountains deeper shadows cast
Into the glen;
The stars shine forth from heaven's height,
Keep guard upon the gloom of night,
And pilgrim men.

On heather bloom the sun shone clear,
And nature joyed in autumn cheer,
Upon the hill;
Now winter's wraith is on the fell,
And frost and snow doth sure foretell
Will come and kill.

But that which seems a wreath of snow
Is mist that makes the green grass grow
On hill and dale;
And may death seen before his time,
His wraith that shadows noonday prime,
For life avail!

THE HAWK AND THE LARK.

The winter wind blows sharp and keen
That o'er the Molloch goes,
While Ken spreads o'er her banks of green,
And lingers as she flows.

The hills of heath so darkly brown,
With crags that tempests greet,
Upon the withered bent look down,
That wavers at their feet.

The songsters and their lays are gone,
Or dumb, they bide their time,
While Ken flows through the vale alone,
No bird to mate his rhyme.

The whistle of the withered leaves,
Where woods are growing bare,
The fir-tree bough that soughing grieves
The flight of summer fair.

The stubble fields in naked guise
The plough doth furrow o'er,
And turn the brown earth to the skies,
To storm and cranreugh hoar.

It is a time of poortith stern,
And hunger in the wind,
When how to live is hard to learn
As falling waves to bind.

Yet life is here, endeavour high,
And purpose fell we meet:
Yon hawk that poises in the sky,
And lark that heaven doth greet,

On agile wing he scours the hill,
O'er scaur and broomy brae,
While pausing here and there at will
To mark and seize his prey.

With gliding motion all at ease,
Be it to rise or fall,
His wing will do what he may please,
His eye surveyeth all.

The little birds his shadow feel
Between them and the sun,
Within the brake and broom they steal,
Death's sickle dread to shun.

With wings outspread upon the air,
Now quivering, then at rest,
His eye beholds each dewy lair,
And small bird's humble nest.

With startled chirp upsprings a lark,
In bounding flight on high,
His mate he warns, and bids her mark
Yon terror in the sky.

A moment pausing here and there,
He soundeth sharp alarm,
And bids his helpmeet leave her lair
If she would 'scape from harm.

He cries in vain, no mate will soar
To share his upward flight;
Then all alone to heaven's door
He rose, and hid in light.

Up through the cloud and azure high
He mocked the hawk's wing strong,
But for his mate a yearning cry
Went throbbing through his song.

The hawk withdrew his steadfast gaze,
The spell it would not hold,
Away he flew to other braes,
The lark was safe in fold!

KILDONAN BRAES.

Sweet lassie, stay!
The morn is gray,
The day far east;
Long time may run
Beside yon sun,
While we may feast
On brambles black,
And brown nuts crack,
Upon Kildonan braes!

The sea is still,
And rests at will
From this to Ayr;
With silver light
Each ripple bright
Doth diamonds wear!

Ah! treasure trove,
The sea above,
Is on Kildonan braes!

For Arran fair
Has pleasure rare,
The whole year round,
But all forgot
Will be as naught
Where thou art found!
Full blest is he
Who stays with thee
Upon Kildonan braes!

Thine eyes do hold
A wealth untold,
Where pearls sleep!
Oh, who shall dive,
And diving live
To seize and keep!
Thy lips to kiss,
That meaneth bliss
Upon Kildonan braes!

Go east or west,
But be thou blest
With store of love!
Time reaps the earth
Of all its mirth
Where'er we rove!
Then gather fast
Ere fruit be past,
On these Kildonan braes!

Now youth is thine,
Thou may'st not tine
  Thy gift for eild;
The brambles red
For thee are spread
  On life's wide field!
Then haste along
With gladsome song,
  Upon Kildonan braes!

But take thee care!
For thorns will tear
  Where sweetness grows.
Seek thou the true
Where gleams the dew
  That Zion knows!
Give God thy heart,
Nor e'er depart
  From bliss on heaven's braes!

BRAMBLE WINE.

It was upon a winter night,
  When rain fell thick on hill and dale,
I sat within the radiant light
  That streamed through beauty's wondrous vail.

All sweetness that the earth e'er knew
  Was at my hand to seize and taste,
But time's wind through the garden blew,
  And bade me eat and drink with haste.

'Twas not the fruit of orange grove,
That ripened in Hesperian light,
Fresh-gathered by the hand of love
To quench our thirst with sweet delight.

Nor grapes that grew beside the Rhine,
The scent of spices far at sea,
The sweetness growing on the pine,
Nor clusters of the apple tree.

All these, or such as these, were there
To wile away the winter night,
And bid begone the ghosts of care
Before the wand of beauty bright.

She poured for me the bramble wine,
And straight my glass was blushing red,
Then hot was I as on the line
When noon light streameth overhead.

The juice was uncorrupted, pure,
A tempered draught both sharp and sweet,
No mist the reason to obscure,
Or lead aside the traveller's feet.

But meeting with her glancing eye
The wine took fire that kindled me;
Thus beats the heart and heaves the sigh
With fire that death alone can free!

THE BÁLLOCHANÂMER.

Full many a town the river may throng
With its argosies and clamour,
But Creetown for me, that lives in the song
That is hummed by the Bállochanâmer!

So let the wild winds blow east or west,
And the thunder on mountains hammer,
Over oceans I haste, like the bird to its nest,
On the banks of the Bállochanâmer!

'Tis there that the Cree doth linger about,
As if loath the Solway to follow,
And throws her green mantle o'er salmon and trout,
While she biddeth them wait on to-morrow!

She waiteth to hark the Minniepool tune,
And to fondle the stripling charmer,
To seize in her arms the young honeymoon
Of her love with the Bállochanâmer!

And there on a mount o'er the crystal stream
Abides in her bower, my charmer,
'Tis thus my life is a waking dream,
Like the song of the Bállochanâmer!

Oh, had my love but an evergreen bower,
Where no blast of time could harm her,
And we could dance with each passing hour
To the lilt of the Bállochanâmer!

But the river has sung through the ages past
In a reverie and murmur,
And nations of men into sleep hath cast
This song of the Bállochanâmer!

Oh, fain would I drink thy music deep,
Nor would ever yield to slumber,
For here is love that my heart would keep
Through the ages none can number!

Then Minniepool! be thou soft and kind,
And as tender as my charmer,
To an endless strain my spirit bend,
Like the song of the Bállochanâmer!

'Tis a vain request, for the very earth
Will melt with its rocky armour,
And an end o'ertake whate'er had birth,
With the song of the Bállochanâmer!

But within my heart its music wakes
The song of another river,
Where on love and life the morning breaks
In the land that is for ever!

THE DOCHART.

Whereto this hurry and strain,
This moaning and speeding amain?
Thou furious river!
The swifter the sooner is sped
The life that goes to the dead,
To the grief of the striver!

Hold in the rein of the steed,
And wander as stream in the mead
'Mid butter-cups golden!
Enjoy the sun and the wind,
And the mountain shadow kind
Thou dream enfolden!

In vain thy speech to me!
Child of necessity
I journey on!
With naked feet I speed
O'er rocks without remede
Till I am gone!

I sprang from Ben More's breast,
And in my loch found rest
A little space;
But soon I left my nest,
So deep and darkly blest,
To run my race.

Since then no peace I've known,
But trouble still has grown
With my advance;
For me no pause nor peace,
From pressure no release
But death's fell trance.

Unto Macnab I press,
His stillness to caress,
Where sorrow weeps!
He was my king of yore,
Fierce as my waters roar,
And now he sleeps!

As through the rocks I churn,
And with my fury burn,
I tire of day,
And long for that still wave
That all my woe will grave
In deep Loch Tay!

So round Inchbuie I
Will clasp my arms and cry,
Take me to rest!
With chieftains of the past,
'Neath death's dark mantle cast,
I would be blest!

Unhappy stream art thou,
Nor singular I trow,
A pilgrim lone!
For men like thee are born,
From peace are swiftly torn,
To toil and groan!

Nor yet unblest the race,
If after all the chase
They find relief,
And in the lake of rest
Forget the toil distrest
Of former grief!

And such a rest remains
For sin and all its pains
To those who love,
And trust Jehovah's grace,
At last to see his face,
No more to rove!

Although the heart be sore,
And deafened with the roar
Of groans distrest,
Faith in the Christ of God
Will overtake the road,
And enter rest!

Now Dochart take thy way!
Before thee still is day,
God speed thy feet!
Thou leavest not the light,
But seekest fortune bright,
By peace made sweet!

THE LOCHAY.

How deep and still thy course and mien
Thou river of Lochay!
As full of peace and joy I ween
As aught that knows the day!

Thy journey henceforth is but brief
Till thou Loch Tay caress,
Thy heart at last has found relief
From all that did distress.

The trees upon thy border cast
Their shadows in the flood,
Thy deep dark wave scarce floweth past,
But lingers in the wood!

The spirit of the scene is peace
On wave and on the land,
From warfare nature has release,
And plays with breezes bland.

Finlarig grounds are green and low,
They couch thy path beside,
And hear thy waters soft and slow
As o'er the heavens they ride!

For in thy bosom rests the sky,
With fields of azure deep,
And fleecy clouds there anchored lie
Like dreams o'erarched by sleep!

These low green mounds are like to thee,
The realms of silence they,
The image of eternity
That haunteth deep Loch Tay!

Their hollows and their knolls are hid
With sylvan crowns of green;
On ages past oblivion's lid,
As turf on life has been!

Upon a knoll in woodland shade
Finlarig castle stands,
In coat of ivy green arrayed,
The breath of time withstands.

Beside it on the self-same hill
A tomb contains the great;
The past with all its good and ill
Held fast in death's estate.

There generations lie at rest
That erst great troubles knew ;
Now they are still as Lochay's breast,
Where camps yon heaven blue !

A happy traveller art thou
Whose last stage is thy best,
Where peace is written on thy brow,
And pleasure thrills thy breast.

The trouts within thy bosom play,
The salmon leap for joy ;
Thy night is gladsome as thy day,
Thy gold has no alloy !

And when thy course at length is run,
Through glen and wider vale,
It is not to forsake the sun,
And former times bewail.

But only to spread out thy wave
O'er deep and wide Loch Tay,
To roam, and with thy silver lave
Far shores 'neath broader day !

A CRY FROM THE WOOD.

The day had been a day of light,
Was clear and warm with summer breath,
The scene a feast for human sight,
Where nature wore her loveliest wreath.

The sun had set yont mountains high,
And shadows gathered in the glen,
The stars came forth upon the sky,
And glimmered through night's shady den.

From inn sequestered by the stream
That through Glen Lochay seeks Loch Tay,
I stepped into the hazy gleam
Of star and moon where late was day.

Some clouds were spread from star to star,
The moon was sinking in the west,
And sounds of waters from afar
Rocked weary men in slumber blest.

I paced along the darksome way
That southward led to fair Killin,
And where the Dochart breaks in spray
Upon the rocks with wrathful din.

The eye was wandering there and here,
O'er land obscure and sparkling sky,
When yell and shriek of pain and fear
Did sharply through the forest cry.

I turned and gazed whence came the yell,
And lo! a wood like night's own tent,
As dark as death and mouth of hell
For him whose heart on life is bent!

Sharp were the cries might pierce a stone,
But strength ebbed fast from terror's tongue,
That ended with an eerie groan
Of woe that all my bosom rung!

Thereon the sound of hooting owl
Came o'er the vale from fir-wood dark,
An echo of death's grievous howl,
And bidding earth and heaven hark !

Then came the low wail of the fox,
The outlaw's voice, that death awoke
To tell his tale unto the rocks,
And plead with night to heal his stroke!

From hill to hill woe called to woe,
And, shuddering in their mantles gray,
The eerie glens couched deep and low,
And longed for breaking of the day !

I journeyed on, went through Killin,
And over Dochart's trouble stood ;
There saw the spray and heard the din
Of surging wave and broken flood.

Above the rapids white with foam,
And isle that guarded the uproar,
Afar to south was Dochart's home,
Within the bosom of Ben More.

Short seemed the course the stream had run
Since first it left its native hill,
To journey northward from the sun,
Its fate and passion to fulfil.

There stood Ben More with summits three,
Beneath the moon in silver gray ;
The voice of past felicity
Doth haunt the sorrow of to-day !

Like such a stream is life to see,
  Its origin and end still near,
Though great the change from youthful glee
  To age and famine of good cheer!

As over Dochart stands Ben More,
  With Bīnyan and Balquhidder braes,
The scent of wild thyme and the lore
  Of stream new-born that runs and plays;

So does remembrance tinge our doom,
  As mountains great long shadows throw
From life's gay cradle to the tomb,
  Till years seem less the more they grow!

For time a dread magician is,
  Who shuts up men in dreams of air,
No more to wake for aught but this,
  The clutch of death that will not spare!

So then, the deep and earnest sound
  Of Dochart in perpetual fray,
The while he clasped Inchbuie round,
  And sought his rapid force to stay,

Threw back the cry within mine ear,
  That thrilled the wood with sudden woe
Of life surprised amid good cheer,
  And reft of all by one fell blow!

ETERNITY.

Eternity ! who may thee know,
  Thine awful face behold ?
Incomprehensible art thou,
  For ever from of old !

Returning steps on ancient time
  Thy source can never reach,
Still stretches out thy boundless clime,
  A sea without a beach !

Though sail we on with wind and tide
  To gain the gates of dawn,
Unnumbered leagues their distance hide
  'Tween us and morning's throne !

An unbeginning past is thine,
  Whose greatness cannot grow,
Though years in long continuous line
  Into its bosom flow !

That past it is a mountain white,
  Where snowflakes fall in storm,
That never add unto its height,
  Nor swell its during form !

Across the marble of thy head,
  Thy rocks that aye endure,
The trooping worlds have come and fled
  As shadows o'er the moor !

And evermore thou art the same,
Like yonder azure sky,
While roll the stars and flash and flame,
Then vanish from thine eye!

God filleth thee, and God alone!
His glory is thy core,
The inner shrine to man unknown,
He worships at the door!

SNOWDROP AND YARROW.

Two friends sleep here in garden ground,
Where flowers and berries grow;
A snow-white cat and noble hound
Share death and peace below.

Of Newfoundland and Bernard kind,
A roving blade was he,
His lion face and tail behind
Proclaimed defiancy.

His muzzle and his eye-brows brown,
His shaggy legs were dun,
His coat was black with curls grown,
By nature's fingers spun.

Eleven years he paced with me
The fields at noon and even,
Blithe was his heart and full of glee,
And earth was all his heaven.

He chased the rabbit and the hare,
And through the fields went roaming,
And coming back his tongue did flare,
A red brand in the gloaming.

When Clyde withdrew his waters broad
Into a channel narrow,
And hastened on his sea-ward road,
He whistled then on Yarrow.

Straightway he sprang o'er sand and mud,
And rambled many a mile,
To seize the wild duck in the flood
Was winged by hunter's guile.

He roved the waters up and down,
In the face of gray Dumbarton;
Nor thought of years have come and gone
Since he put on the tartan.

By tidal wave brave Yarrow's days
Before him soon had ending,
And he withdrew from Barscube braes,
Another fortune pending.

We journeyed east and found a home,
Lasswade in fair Midlothian,
Where oft we in the wood did roam
Beside our nest, Carlethan.

He snuffed the waters of the Esk
That flowed past Hawthornden,
And sought his pleasures at such risk
As sons of mortal men.

Three years had passed, and then we left
That life within the hollow,
Was like a pool in rocky cleft,
Whose waves are slow to follow.

He trained far south to Galloway,
By Tinto unto Parton,
Then up the Ken ran far away
From tide and gray Dumbarton.

He swam the linns and wiels of Ken,
And roved when he had freedom,
As eager as the sons of men,
And Esau erst of Edom.

When dew was on the verdant blade,
Or ice was on the fountain,
When sun or cloud threw gleam or shade
On shoulders of the mountain,

We two went up the Molloch's height,
All seasons I remember,
Alike fair day and stormy night,
Bright June and dark December.

When wreaths of snow were swirling fast
Upon the Molloch steep,
He gloried in the biting blast
With many a rush and leap.

When waved in June the yellow broom,
And milk-white was the thorn,
When sang the thrush on summer's plume
Beneath the eye of morn,

We strode along the dewy grass
  And saw the rising day
The cloudy bars of night o'erpass,
  And soar to heaven away.

But now he sleeps in narrow bed,
  In shadow dense and lone ;
No more across the Molloch led
  To gambol in the dawn !

Nor yet alone, for puss reclines
  Beside his shaggy form,
In death as life their fate entwines,
  Whose love was always warm.

When but a kitten it would climb
  The hill with me and Yarrow,
And on a bank of sweet wild thyme
  Would play and bask its marrow.

This Snowdrop shared his daily meal,
  And slept upon his breast,
Between his paws was safe from ill,
  As in a downy nest.

Now death has taken both away
  Into his dwelling narrow ;
Poor Snowdrop and fair youth at play,
  With age and noble Yarrow !

THE THREE GIANTS.

In a walk one day from Inverness, on approaching a standing-stone between Beauly and Dingwall, I met an old man coming out from a cottage door. He told me that strange things had been said about that stone, and thereon related this tradition. There were three giants who lived on a hill, called to this day Dunaver — The Giant Fought or Fight. Each wished to be lord of all, and all agreed that he who carried his stone farthest should win. Of the three stones one has fallen, while the other two stand, the one on the one side of the road and the other on the opposite side between Beauly and the Muir of Ord. Such is the basis of the following tale of the Three Giants.

Upon Dunaver giants three
  Abode in time long gone,
Before the Romans came to see
  The men of Caledon.

The view was far o'er hill and vale,
  There beauty one might scan,
And grandeur that would sight regale
  As Eden the first man.

The land sufficed to give them bread,
  Each wight his share in law,
But each would be the other's head,
  And lord of all he saw.

They brothers were, and had been born
In one travail of birth ;
To take the sword they all did scorn,
But strove like sons of mirth.

Three massive stones they roughly tore
From out the solid rock,
Of goodly height, ten feet or more,
And thick as ancient oak.

Who should the farthest bear his stone
In travel to the sea,
He should be lord of all alone,
And say, None mates with me.

As one a web of cloth may throw
End foremost by his neck,
And on his journey forth doth go,
Nor any peril reck ;

So each brave giant bore his stone,
On shoulder strong upheld,
As forth he stepped to make his own
The world his eye beheld.

Now Roderick a beard could boast
Like to a stormy cloud,
Fired by the sun, and wildly tost
By squally winds and loud.

With ardour keen he ran his race,
While redder than the moon
On harvest field was Roderick's face
Beneath the sun at noon.

With bounding step and leap he went,
A gay and eager hero,
O'er rock and heath he sped intent
To win the seat of Pharaoh.

But, slipping on a tuft of grass,
Face foremost down he fell,
The stone shot down a heavy mass,
And made the giant yell.

For on his head it fell with force,
And pinned him to the ground;
There Roderick cried till he was hoarse,
But respite found he none.

The hope of land is his no more,
He fears a greater loss,
His perished beard he must deplore
Deep buried in the moss.

With air regretful did he tear
His chin from cruel stone,
Beneath it lay his golden hair,
The glory late his own.

"Now thou has lost me more than I
By toil could ever gain;
For me thou in the bog must lie,
Nor ever rise again!"

Just then black Donald hove in sight,
And thrice he skipped with glee,
And thought in view of Roderick's plight,
The better chance for me!

"Cheer up! good Roderick," said he,
"The sun shines after rain,
Be patient yet, and thou shalt see
Thy fortune grow amain.

"And if I farthest bear the load,
My forester thou'lt be,
And thou may'st safely go abroad,
No beard to tangle thee."

Then Donald ran and Donald sang,
A great estate was his,
Till echo through the mountains rang
Anticipating bliss.

But in his pathway stood a bull
That tossed the earth about,
His roaring yell foreboded dool,
While foam oozed from his snout.

His form was huge, his flesh was stent,
His neck a stallion mane,
On arching hill of tufty bent,
Steep rising from the plain.

As on the summit you descry
A rugged brow of rock,
Between two peaks that pierce the sky,
And frowning tempests mock,

So poised the head upon his neck,
With horns could mountains toss;
To mate such power, far less to break,
Would Donald far surpass!

His eyes burned slow with flames of scorn,
Like lakes in shaggy heath
Fired with the red light of the morn
And with the storm's snell breath!

But little time had Donald then
To view such dreadful might,
The bull rushed forth and heaved amain
Poor Donald out of sight!

The stone soon slipped from Donald's arm,
Nor high in air it rose,
But fell to earth withouten harm,
And thereto clung full close.

Now Callum More came up behind,
The stone he steady bore,
And with a canny, cautious mind
He looked around, before.

While as the bull snuffed up the air,
And upward cast his eye,
To see if Donald was not there
Careering in the sky,

The Callum More then stepped aside,
And sped 'mong birch and hazel,
With cunning haste he straight did glide
Like any wiry weasel.

And as the bull did toss and roar,
And cast the trees about,
More eager Callum did explore
And thread the wood throughout.

'Twas well the bull beheld him not,
Or woe to Callum too,
His own had mated Donald's lot,
And then eheu ! eheu !

But through the wood and o'er the plain
Great Callum strode away,
Till, wearied with the dreadful strain,
Down with the stone he lay.

As Callum lay beside his stone,
And gathered strength again,
The bull ran south with roar and moan,
And plunged into the main.

Far ran he down into the sea
Ere water saddle gave,
At length he swam right royally,
A mountain on the wave !

Storm in the east, the sea awoke,
It broke with thud and roar,
On sandy beach and jutting rock,
With foaming rage grew hoar.

As some huge berg that south doth sail
Through elemental war,
His head above the driving gale,
And gleaming from afar ;

So swam the bull across the main,
A barque with double mast,
A turret ship that mocked the strain
Of billow and of blast.

The sun, while setting in the west,
Did wonder's self betray,
As with his light the horns were drest
Like mountains bearing day!

Confound the bull! the tempest roared,
Why for him no mischance?
Will all the world by him be gored,
And he on nations prance?

Then spake the thunder from the sky:
Even heaven itself he mocks,
But pits are made for all the high,
And strokes with earthquake shocks!

The lightning sped with forkèd flash,
On eager purpose bent,
It struck the bull, and then a crash
As 'twere a mountain rent!

Down sank the bull, and then each horn,
Like mast above the wreck,
Gored by the fire, in splinters torn,
Stood o'er a sea-washed deck!

Then slowly sank each floating peak
Of riven horn, until
'Twas vain o'er ocean's breadth to seek
For that once living hill!

Great Callum rose, full glad I ween
To see the foe go down;
All now was his whate'er was seen
Of land the sun shone on.

He set on end each pillar stone,
In earth made firm and fast;
And first and farthest was his own,
That at the start was last.

'Tween Beauly and the Muir of Ord
Two stand unto this day,
On this and that side of the road,
In coats of greenish gray.

Great Callum's stone upon the south,
And Donald's on the north,
In unhewn vigour and uncouth,
On time and space look forth.

But years ago Red Roderick's fell,
Its footing was not sure,
But two remain the tale to tell
Of one long vanished hour.

Now Roderick's stone was set up last,
And he with Callum stood
Beside the pillar, when a blast
Was heard, and then a thud

Of something heavy on the ground;
And Donald's voice was heard,
The while he sank in moss profound,
Where Roderick lost his beard!

As Donald's trunk went down below,
O'er mire he waved each hand,
The brothers well the sign did know,
And drew him to the strand.

Now Donald's leg was broken through,
And though it healed at last,
The riven bone, when joined anew,
Could never travel fast.

A halt he had hence all his days,
His joy in travel little;
The hunt abroad o'er hills and dales
He valued not a spittle.

Now Roderick was a woodman made,
Whose beard was in the moss;
While roaming through the forest glade
He lost the sense of loss.

Then Donald said, "Great Callum, hear!
A great estate is thine!
I envy not, have thou no fear,
A small request is mine.

"When rests thy realm a fence within
Then I shall keep the gate,
That none but thou and royal kin
May pass in lordly state.

"A wide estate mine eyes have seen,
All earth and sea beneath,
A chasm deep and dread between,
I feared to draw my breath.

"Then little did the world seem,
But treasure great my life;
Thou'rt welcome, Callum, to the dream
Of wealth that breedeth strife!"

When many years had come and gone
The giants hoary grew,
With hirpling step they travelled on,
Far from the youth they knew!

At length they heard the call of death,
Those children of one birth;
They all alike renounced their breath,
And turned to mother earth.

But what their feats, and who they were,
Memorial is none,
Save what those pillar stones declare
Of ages long since gone.

And yet a vein of truth may run
Through all this variorum;
For striving greed beneath this sun
Would carry off Cairngorum!

A CHIEL IN GLENOWTHER.

As I gaed up the hicht
That rises yont Glenowther,
I saw a queerish wicht,
A besom owre his shouther.

His feet were glaurie black,
The taes leuked through the leather,
On ilka leg a sack
Was like a pricket blether.

The tatie sacks were worn,
They flappered lowse and raggie,
The knees keeked through in scorn,
And glowered frae ilka baggie.

The coat was scuffie brown,
The buttons were but scanty,
The holes were roun' and roun',
The wind blew through them canty.

His hat, bent back and fore,
Sat on his heid fu' brawly,
Belike some fa'in tour
O' grandeur melancholy.

His breist was braid and deep,
And tousie as the heather,
Whaur muir-fowl house micht keep,
And coveys sleep thegither.

His broo was like the sand
That's wrinkled by the billow,
Or rock embattled land
Whence aft has gaun the swallow.

Like gray stanes owre twa wells,
Half covered owre wi' heather,
Whaur daylicht hardly tells
Its comin here or thither.

Yet whaur the water gleam
Breaks smilin' through the shadow,
As silver rins the stream
At morn through grassy meadow,

His eebrees threw their shade
  Athwart the founts o' vision;
O' day and nicht they made
  A wilderin' confusion.

His nose was weathered sair
  Wi' storms frae ilka quarter,
And stood owre mow and hair
  A craig abune disaster.

Like Dunnet owre the firth,
  Whaur up the tides come bocken,
Rampagin' roun' the earth,
  Their cankert wrath tae slocken.

As owre the hags he sprang,
  And shook ilk tuft o' heather,
He raised wi' whirrin' bang
  The muircocks in Glenowther.

The dawn owre Ballageich
  In flarin' clouds cam ridin',
That pawed like chairgers skeigh,
  Wham rage alane was guidin'.

The scad o' fiery morn
  Lit up his birnie besom,
And eke his face o' scorn
  Wi' wrath and grief fu' waesome.

"Whaur be ye gaun?" I speired,
  "The muir is in a trummel
Whane'er your step is heard,
  Or lips begin tae rummel!"

"And wha is't speirs my gate ?
Yet tent ye tae my eeran',
I bear the seal o' fate
Tae richt wrangs a' past bearin'.

"The warl syne the flood
Has never steered its midden,
Aye fed by ilka brood,
Free coup and nocht forbidden !

"O' Hercules men dream,
He cleaned the Augean stable
By bringin' in a stream
Tae wash the filthy fable.

"For thirty years it lay,
And wallowed in ammonia,
Till ta'en as waters' prey,
It swam tae Patagonia !

"Nae help o' stream I speir,
I'll soop ilk land and city
Wi' this birn besom here,
That taks on dirt nae pity."

His besom thick wi' glaur
He twirled aff his shouther,
And swung his heid ootowre,
While rained a peaty pouther.

It laid ilk flappin' rag,
His feet and legs bespeckled,
And on his face ilk snag
Wi' dirt was a' befreckled.

Then, layin' on his shouther
The scourer o' the warl,
He warsled through Glenowther,
Himsel' an unco harl.

Sic man I ne'er did see,
On bent or on the heather,
And yet it is nae lee,
We've aften met thegither.

He's sib tae a' mankind
Wha pick the een o' ithers,
Tae fauts o' self aye blind,
Yet curse the like in brithers.

THE FALLS OF ROGIE, AND TOR ACHILTY.

It was upon an autumn morn
I hailed the breezy air,
When reapers shore the golden corn
Within Strathpeffer fair.

I asked a man upon the way
Of mountains I would see,
My tongue was strange, he could not say
What might enlighten me.

A maid was passing at the time
Made answer to my quest,
Who said the hills I sought to climb
Stood distant in the west.

Kinnellan loch was near, she said,
Nor far the Falls of Rogie,
Where waters fell with thunder dread,
And foamed 'neath birks so vogie.

Her cheeks were of the heather bloom
On which the morning shines,
Her smile would dissipate the gloom
Where sorrow's victim pines.

Of modest mien, yet frank withal,
She graced that morn with light
That e'en the sun hath not at call,
Nor stars that crown the night.

Then up Strathpeffer brae I went,
Kinnellan loch passed by,
And o'er the moor of heath and bent
Where gray rocks scattered lie.

Great mountains in the distance dim,
Their solitary height
Displayed on the horizon's rim,
In azure dark bedight,

While nigh at hand the birchen woods
Their graceful tassels hung,
Upon the streams and foaming floods
That wakened echo's tongue.

Unto the ear there came anon
Blackwater's muffled thunder,
And soon the eye did gaze upon
The scene with silent wonder.

Blackwater rolls upon his way
In native, dark attire,
But here he breaks in silver spray,
And foams with tawny fire.

Before the Falls an island rock
Stood up against the wave,
The waters parted with a shock,
Then downward foaming drave.

But though divided as they fell,
They met within the linn,
And heard the troubled echoes tell
The thunder and the din.

Then forth Blackwater spread again,
A dark and rapid stream,
With spots of foam upon its mane,
And sped a troubled dream.

I crossed the stream, and spent the hours
That circle round the noon
In sunlit space, 'mid birchen bowers,
And heard the waters croon.

The mist drove o'er Ben Wyvis' head,
No sunshine on his brow,
While light on torr and rock was spread
On glens and lochs below.

Some other time the sunshine fair
Upon his head will glow,
And daylight's glory linger there,
While night claims all below.

Adown the stream I wandered on,
And came to Achilty,
And crossed the plain and climbed anon,
Through shade of many a tree,

The bosky bosom of the Torr,
Till on its heath-clad height
The eye did far around explore
The scene with still delight.

There, nigh at hand, in hollow deep,
Loch Achilty was seen,
Apart and dark in lonesome sleep,
The bosky braes between.

No waters flow into its breast,
Nor ever haste away;
Full in itself, and all at rest
From increase or decay.

With face of rock and heath-clad crown,
The Torr stands up above
Two waters as they travel on,
And through the green strath rove.

Blackwater on one side doth run,
The Conon on the other,
Link in and out, then meet as one,
And seek the sea together.

The Conon coming down the glen,
As through a pleasant meadow,
With silver gleamed, which now and then
Grew dim with cloud-born shadow.

High in the north Scuir Vuilin rose
Beyond the Conon's springs,
Where eagles on his peaks repose,
And plume for flight their wings,

And nameless mountains near and far
Held up their lofty forms
To catch the gleam of sun or star
Above the cloudy storms.

The scene was sweet and wildly grand,
Where fain the eye would rest,
But little time can man command
Upon the mountain's crest.

So must my steps return anon,
And leave the mountain's crest,
Across the plain and bridge of stone
That spans Blackwater's breast.

Then up the brae 'tween fields of corn,
Of golden hue and vogie,
I reached the strath was left at morn
To see the Falls of Rogie.

But what of all I saw that day
Will linger with me ever,
Is neither loch nor mountain gray,
Nor wood, nor foaming river,

But that sweet maid, her eye the morn,
Her lip the fount of love!
Who wins her hand all earth may scorn,
Himself in Eden's grove!

THE ROMAN BRIDGE OVER THE SOUTH CALDER.

Still art thou here, thou span of stone!
Thou Roman bridge o'er Calder thrown.
What ages thou hast stretched thine arm
Above the waves nor taken harm!

What feet have crossed thy cause-way hard,
That bore dumb hearts, who had no bard
To tell the tale of joy or pain,
And freight time's vesper with the strain.

The Caledonian hero sped
With naked feet upon thy head,
In nature's vestment hied he fast,
His locks afloat upon the blast.

The Roman soldier paced thy arch
With heavy step in steady march,
His tent and tools upon his back,
The world's conquest in his pack.

Few were the miles he northward went
Until his onward power was spent;
A rush of valour from the hill
Made havoc of his works of skill.

He built a wall from east to west,
And vigil kept, forbidding rest;
By night and day from every tower
His eye kept watch to guard his power.

Perplexed at home, distressed abroad,
Rome's armies southward took the road
For home across thy cause-way hard,
And left thee here behind her sword.

The wall is down, the sword is rust,
Her empire trodden in the dust ;
This bridge remains, no fitful dream,
But wreath of fame o'er time's strong stream !

The feet of Saxon and of Gael,
The steed of knight in coat of mail,
And drover with his herd of spoil
From border fray of blood and toil,

Have drummed upon thy stony ear
The lilt of hope, the cry of fear,
The song of joy and triumph high,
The curse of hate and love's soft sigh !

The pilgrimage of human life,
Its love and hate, its peace and strife,
Its pride of heart and stooping shame,
Its good and ill, a smoking flame,

Have passed across thy stony span
And told the tale of fleeting man,
Now going south and then to north,
But unto death still speeding forth !

Since last I saw thee, yonder sun
Well nigh a score of years has run ;
Though naught to him, a mite to thee,
But who can tell how much to me ?

Then other feet kept pace with mine,
A heart of treasure sore to tine,
A face that with the morning shone,
Whose love was love and mine alone!

That eye so soft, so clear and true,
Those lips that dropped with honey dew,
That face whose smile would slay despair,
Have vanished into viewless air!

She was the moon that lit my night,
And rode the sky with starry light;
But with the moons of long years seven
Her home has been an unseen heaven!

The moon will grow, and shine on thee
Through lattice work of many a tree,
While birds will warble in the grove,
And tell thee of their summer love.

Thy moon will fade and pass away,
And Calder through the darkness stray,
Fair summer vanish from the wood,
And winter rule the hill and flood!

Thy time of blackness yieldeth soon
To silver light of new-born moon,
Old winter hastes before the thaw,
And spring comes back to greenwood shaw.

What days or months or years can bring
My moon on a returning wing,
From starry heights, a seven years' flight,
To deck anew a longsome night!

Still span the stream! and hold thou fast
The rock-bound Calder driving past!
As brave and strong to-day art thou
As eighteen centuries ago!

Thy seat is firm, thy river flows,
And round thee summer's forest grows,
While earth remains arch thou the stream,
And blend thy shade with heaven's beam!

Of stone thou art, and rock thy stay,
Thy back is turned on heaven alway,
Thy arms embrace the skirts of earth,
And worship her who gave thee birth.

The river flows beneath thy breast,
Nor toucheth thee with its unrest,
The march of time with wasting breath
Ne'er mocks thee with the threat of death!

Yet what of earth can time defy?
Thy span will perish as from sky
The rainbow glory of the cloud
When sets the sun and winds blow loud!

So fare thee well, old Roman span!
More blest than thou the pilgrim man
Who treats the world as a bridge,
Nor makes his home upon the ridge,

But travels on to reach the shore,
While far beneath time's waters roar;
His heaven on the other side,
Beyond the rushing, foaming tide!

THE BANKS OF TUMMEL.

'Twas in September, on a day
When rain and sun contended,
From Pitlochrie I took my way,
And up the Tummel wended.

By Cluny Bridge I crossed the wave,
And through the woods I wandered,
While murmuring waters music gave
The pilgrim as he pondered.

The yellow birch and rowan red,
The fir tree and the oak,
The ash and hazel there outspread
Their glory on the rock.

Where Tummel and the Garry meet,
As if in coy confusion,
The forest covers their retreat
With love's own sweet illusion.

Then on my right I leave the roar
Of dark and stormy Garry;
Nor Killiecrankie's pass explore,
With war I may not tarry,

Up Tummel stream my threading way
Now hides and then uncovers,
A happy realm to dream and stray,
The hunting-ground of lovers.

If nature's beauty could impart
  Its glory to the mind,
And visions fair inspire the heart
  With joy that is not blind,

Then would I stray by Tummel stream,
  And glance at Bonskied bower,
And by Allean stretch out my dream,
  Through many a summer hour!

Nor linger there, but passing on
  By loch of Tummel wander,
And gaze on gray Schiehallion,
  Where Rannoch's waters thunder!

As I did on that autumn day,
  With ravishing delight,
And as a hunter sought the prey
  With eager ear and sight.

So on a time a son of Spain,
  With a brave heart full of wonder,
And a burning hope naught could restrain,
  Through Florida did wander.

Through woods as dark as the heart of night,
  He toiled a dauntless hero,
Through waters deep in their stormy might
  He sought a blessed aera!

For he dreamed a dream that a fount was there
  That ransomed from decay,
Whose waters of a virtue rare
  Gave youth and life for aye!

Thus did he roam through many a vale,
And hollow 'mid the mountains ;
But his eye grew dim, and his heart did fail
To reach that gem of fountains.

But if a dell in the wide, round earth
Could claim this untold treasure,
Then Tummel banks might boast the birth
Of pure and endless pleasure !

Yet we may not seek such virtue rare
In all the world's glory,
For though the scene be passing fair
'Tis but a traveller's story !

For the life of a man may not linger here,
'Neath the rowan red or hazel :
Of the fairest bower the leaf is sere
On the birch tree's golden tassel !

THE ROUND TOWER OF ABERNETHY.

The Round Tower,
The Round Tower,
The Tower of Abernethy,
Throws shadows long
Across the throng
Have drunk the stream of Lethe !

The Tower is high,
Frequents the sky,
Looks down on living people ;

The stone is old,
And the hands are cold
That built this ancient steeple!

The Tower is still,
As those that fill
The graves before its feet:
A secret keep,
Like the hill asleep,
Whose echoes mortals cheat!

What hour this dial's shade doth throw
  Upon the churchyard sward
No wise man of the time may know
  Beyond the dreaming bard!

Beyond the date of history,
  No man deciphers thee,
A riddle and a mystery
  Whose face we cannot see!

The dead are sleeping round thy feet,
  How many ages there
Have found a dim and dark retreat,
  Unlike life's house of care!

Oh fair to see the coral shell,
  Yet is it only stone,
Though once it was, as wise men tell,
  A house that life did own.

So this is now a structure dumb,
  A sentinel of stone,
Where once the breath of life did hum
  The thoughts that sing and groan!

'Tis said the pious once lived there,
As on a watch tower high,
Their hearts poured out to God in prayer,
And communed with the sky.

Then if forgotten they are now
By those who tread the sod,
Their names are written clear, I trow,
In the book of life with God.

And they who would immortal be,
On earth rejoice in fame,
At last they will become like thee,
A dumb and empty name!

But he who serveth God the Lord,
On Jesus Christ doth stay,
Hath life eternal as the word
That doth endure for aye!

Oh, Round Tower! Oh, Round Tower!
The ages round thee lie,
The living sun themselves an hour,
And must prepare to die!

The spire of stone is high in air,
Beheld from hill and meadow,
And calleth men from far and near
To sleep beneath its shadow.

It looks around Strathearn so fair,
The Tay and Carse of Gowrie,
It marks the harvest riches there,
Claims autumn and her glory.

The seasons four of human life
  Defile before its vision,
The play of youth and manhood's strife,
  The glory and derision.

It taketh tithe from every state,
  From pleasure and from sorrow;
For death is man's appointed fate,
  Whatever hope may borrow.

It lifts a stony sceptre high,
  This tower of Abernethy,
Beneath its shade our life doth lie,
  Ordained to drink of Lethe.

It calls aloud, let mortals hear
  What this deep bell outringeth!
In Christ the Lord there is good cheer
  'Gainst all the morrow bringeth!

Oh Round Tower!
Oh Round Tower!
Thou Tower of Abernethy!
Thy voice I hear
Now giveth cheer
Beyond the stream of Lethè!

While Earn and Tay
Together stray
Along the Carse of Gowrie,
Still lift thy head
Above the dead,
And point to Christ in glory!

KING ADMETUS.

Come, strike the harp ! and evoke from the breeze
A tale of the days of old,
Of lands amid the Grecian seas,
And heroes stout and bold !

There flocks did pasture far and wide,
In mead and lofty heath,
And love-inspired bridegroom and bride
Was stronger far than death !

There was a king, Admetus he,
A man of ancient fame,
A happier fortune might not be
Than such as he could claim.

A lady fair and sweet and true
Possessed his heart and life ;
A nobler pair you might not view
Than this king and his wife.

The king was rich and great, I ween,
And many cares of State,
With labours vast and joys between,
Claimed life and smiling fate.

But envy cast an evil eye
Upon his royal joy ;
Dark clouds eclipsed the azure sky,
And gold became alloy.

As he was hunting in the field,
By stream and dell and hill,
Where forests wide did pleasure yield
Unto the bowman's skill,

A wounded stag drove on the king
And pierced his side full sore,
The blood, insulted, forth did spring,
And turned to purple gore.

Fast flowed away the royal life
Into the ground akin,
And what remained in poison's strife
Consumed itself within.

They bore him to his palace fair,
Where, in a bed of down,
He sank as heavy as despair,
To sigh and groan and moan!

Upon his marriage-day a word
Of prophecy was spoken,
A promise great, a rich reward
Of heaven's grace a token—

When King Admetus in his course
Should tread the fateful vale,
And hear Phlegethon's waters hoarse
Their pilgrimage bewail,

If for his sake a parent dear,
Or wife beloved should die,
Fate would retrieve life's summer year
Beneath a smiling sky.

He should return, and see again
The dewy fields of morn,
And chase the deer on mount and plain
To music of the horn.

His wife bethought her of his case,
And volunteered to die,
That he might live, renew the chase
Where mountains meet the sky.

She entered on a lonely way
Into the sunless land,
And waded streams unknown to day,
Whose blind waves rolled the sand.

One joy was living in her soul,
And did her state illume,
The while she heard Phlegethon roll
His waters through the gloom :

That through her death Admetus rose
To bend his bow anew,
To follow prey where daylight glows
On crags and dales of dew.

One day great Heracles had come,
Approached the palace door,
And found Admetus was at home,
To ask of feats of war.

The hero's fame had gone before
His might with valour fraught,
Yet Heracles himself forbore
To vaunt the deeds he wrought.

The royal table groans with cheer,
They feast them full and free;
One tells the tale, and others hear
The sorrow or the glee.

For many-coloured tales they are,
Of fortune and of woe,
The love and hate, the peace and war,
That mortals undergo.

Before them all Admetus spoke:
"These tales will pass the time,
All fair as doves that haunt the rock,
And soar through heaven sublime.

"I am but young, nor many years
Of mine the past has found,
Yet fruit on memory's tree appears,
And weighs it to the ground.

"With Argonauts I voyaged far,
The Golden Fleece to find,
'Neath light of many a distant star,
My Greece left far behind.

"Returning from my vagrant quest
In search of life's ideal,
But with no gold to line my nest
For perils dire and real,

"I saw Alcestis, and a glance
Revealed the Fleece of Gold,
Spell-bound by love! as in a trance
Her beauty did me hold!

"I sought her hand and won her love,
Her father said me nay,
Unless I boars and lions drove
Unto his palace gay.

"But love is strong, and wise to find
The treasure which it craves,
To negatives and dangers blind,
It stormy perils braves.

"Apollo with his glancing eyes,
That scan all climes of earth,
And from his dwelling in the skies
Turns sadness into mirth,

"Beheld my heart, and saw the dule
That hapless love did shield,
And counselled me how I might rule
The wild beasts of the field.

"He taught me how to play the lyre,
And music's sceptre sway,
To cage in walls of viewless fire
The fiercest beasts of prey.

"I yoked the lion to my car,
The boar of Calydon,
Then drove in chains tempestuous war,
And thus Alcestis won.

"I drove them to the palace door
Of Pelias the great,
And when he heard the lion roar,
And saw his tusked mate,

"He opened wide the brazen gate,
And gave me welcome bland,
Alcestis, mine without debate,
Gave me her heart and hand.

"We married were in royal style,
With feast and music's chime;
Nor could the songs of mirth beguile
The sense of lingering time.

"They held the feast both fast and long,
With wine they were uproarious,
With dance and tale and merry song
The guests esteemed it glorious.

"But glad was I when off we drove
From Pelias and the sea,
To reach my own Thessalian grove,
Alcestis fair with me.

"We dwelt in Pherae many a day,
Roamed far and wide at leisure,
When life was like a rapturous lay,
A symphony of pleasure.

"At length one day, as oft before,
I led the hunt afar,
While echo answered to the roar
Of man and beast at war.

"First in the chase, I reach the deer,
A wounded stag at bay,
Despair has overcome his fear,
And spurs him to the fray.

"With snort and stamp and foaming mouth
He rushed and gored my side,
Then from a cruel wound uncouth
Forth flowed the crimson tide.

"Had I been left to fall asleep
Within that crimson bed,
It had been better than to weep
Alcestis for me dead!

"Too great her love, that she should die
For such a life as mine,
Renounce the spring and summer sky,
And earth's gay pleasures tine!

"For me she dwells in changeless gloom,
And hears Phlegethon sigh,
Who once my palace did illume
As sun the azure sky!

"Too high the price my life has cost,
It shadows all things bright,
And mirth and music now are lost
In my Alcestis' night!

"Could she return I would descend
And bear my proper doom,
Her happy fate would radiance lend
My pathway to illume!"

Then Heracles stood up and said,
"Let pining sorrow flee!
I bring Alcestis from the dead
And all her love for thee!"

He strode away with giant stride,
  Through garden, field, and moor,
Into a desert lone and wide,
  And came to Hades' door.

He sped o'er mounds of driven sand,
  Where bristling spear-grass grew,
As sapless as the hungry land
  That never tastes of dew,

Until he came upon a pit
  That at the mouth was wide,
And narrowed downward to a slit,
  Above a seething tide.

Like to the Gloop in Ronaldsaye,
  Where sullen waters boom,
Beneath a shaft that leads from day
  To narrow, dungeon gloom.

Beneath that shaft a river flows
  That seeks the ocean's strand,
Then back again its tidal throes
  Surge through the hollow land.

Upon the steep and shelving side
  The hero digs his heel,
While sand and gravel gently glide,
  Then forward rush and reel.

From side to side he striding goes,
  The gulf between his feet,
Astride upon the beetling brows,
  Descends to Hades' seat.

On, on he went at fearful pace,
Adown the narrowing shaft;
No other man for such a race
Could boast like strength and craft.

At length he saw the waters hoar,
The sullen waves that broke
With sad and melancholy roar
Within the hollow rock.

Now when he stood upon a cliff
Was nigh the tunnel's base,
And saw a ferryman and skiff
Adown the waters race,

"Hallo!" he cried, "draw up thy boat!
Stern sorrow brought me here;
These realms dark I have not sought
In search of envied cheer.

"To Pluto's court I'm bound in haste,
Draw up and let me in!
And bring me to that kingdom waste,
Where all to death are kin."

Then Charon drew his boat along,
Bade Heracles step in,
Whereon he leaped amid the throng
Of wasted shades and thin.

The boat was high above the waves,
Now deeply sinks, I trow,
While hoary billows threatening rave,
And boil around the prow.

Then Heracles, he took an oar
Within each mighty hand,
While Charon spread the sail and bore
His freight to Pluto's land.

The wind blew fair adown the stream,
Nine days and nights they drove,
Afar from sun or mild moonbeam,
That travellers lorn do love.

No light was there, save that which shone
From pearls 'neath the wave,
Or gleams from many a precious stone
Did all the darkness brave.

While Heracles with wondering gaze
Beheld those lustres strange,
That eyed the deep mysterious maze
Where Acheron did range,

Old Charon said, "Nor wonder thou
Such gems in darkness glow,
For all of price on fame's bright brow
Is carried here below!

"The loves of men and women true,
The deeds of heroes great,
Shine as the stars in heaven's blue
From the roof of death's dim gate!"

With sail and oar they voyage on,
Hemmed in and roofed with rocks;
While shriek the ghosts and sadly moan,
Their outcries echo mocks!

At length the waters journey slow,
And in a lake repose,
Both broad and deep, nor thence may go,
Nor heave with ebbs and flows.

The boat's keel rushes into sand
Against the rising shore,
Then Heracles attains the land,
Swung forward from the oar.

The oar returned to Charon's charge,
He travels forth with speed,
Into a kingdom dim and large,
To win from death remede.

Nor does the hero go alone,
The ghosts keep company,
With many a sigh and many a groan
O'er fair earth's banished glee!

The time he travelled with them down
The dark and troubled stream,
He heard their tale, and many a moan
O'er life's spell-broken dream!

Their step is light, and tips the sand
As swallow skims the wave;
Sure is their journey to the land
That lies beyond the grave!

Stout Heracles speeds on the while,
The ghostly train await,
And with strange tales the time beguile,
Or speech on human fate.

They wonder how that flesh and blood
  Should through those regions roam,
And voyage on the darksome flood
  In search of Plute's home.

But silent is the hero's mind,
  His aim concealed from sight:
A raking coal the fire doth bind
  Through watches of the night.

For had they known his purpose bold,
  Ah! many souls were there,
Had sought relief from death's dark hold,
  To join Alcestis fair!

The desert left behind, they came
  Unto a land of snow,
And mountains high, where wild clouds roam,
  And howling tempests blow.

Now up a slippery steep they climb,
  Then cross a snowy plain,
And hear the avalanche's chime,
  That echo rings again.

As up a terraced garden, they
  Ascend from zone to zone,
And on a cloud-capt summit gray,
  Arrive at Pluto's throne.

Upon the snowy mountain stood
  A crown of granite rock,
Of rugged mien, and steep as rude,
  Where winter tempests broke.

There Pluto sat, as grim and gray
As the rock beneath his feet,
While o'er the mount drove crystal spray,
The snow and bitter sleet.

The ghosts came round about the throne,
Like fluttering mists they clung;
And in the wind was many a groan
Heaved up from sorrow's tongue!

"A boon, a boon of thee I crave,
Thou king of all beneath!"
Said Heracles the true and brave,
Before the throne of death.

"Thy flocks of shades indeed are great,
That through this winter rove,
Return me one from iron fate
To summer and to love!

"A drop of dew that morn doth kiss,
A wave upon the tide,
A blade of grass one may not miss
Upon the pasture wide.

"Then give Alcestis back to earth!
Who died before her time,
And all from love of untold worth,
Has made her name sublime!

"She died when life was rich and gay,
A husband's life to spare,
Who might have strayed in fields of May,
And breathed the sunlit air!

"One year of death for such as she
Is worth a thousand years
Of countless shades necessity
Had claimed in spite of tears!

"Then let me lead her forth again,
To hail the fields of Greece,
And see the sun shine on the main
That heaves a golden fleece!

"For thou art rich, and may'st afford
The generous to play,
One pearl of thy countless hoard
I of thy goodness pray!"

With solemn voice then Pluto spoke,
The tempest ceased to blow,
While whirling winds around the rock
Grew silent on the snow.

"And who is he that dares to come
In flesh and blood this way,
And through my hollow regions roam
In livery of day?

"Brave is the man who comes thus far,
And would return alone,
To scan anew sun, moon, and star,
From shadow of my throne!

"But bolder he who ventures here
To win a gem from death,
A radiant flower from my dim sphere,
To gleam on life's gay wreath!

"Yet may I yield the boon you crave,
And honour priceless love,
And grace the action of the brave
Whom terrors could not move.

"I too in this drear winter land
Can boast Persephonè,
Was snatched by me from breezes bland,
As 'mid Enna's flowers she lay!

"So take Alcestis home with thee,
To hail the sun again,
And hear the murmur of the sea
Beneath the starry train!"

Then thrice he waved his iron hand
O'er regions of despair,
O'er dowie dell to rugged strand,
Like Arran seen from Ayr.

Lo! from the peaks the ghosts upsprung,
On every crag they stood,
Or like to mists they fluttering swung
Athwart those bulwarks rude.

As clouds that rise into the blue,
Whose snow is touched with fire,
A troubled flame of tawny hue
That mounted high and higher,

The ghosts arise o'er hill and glen,
Huge floating vessels they,
Whose sides are rent in tempest's strain,
Like fleets in Biscay Bay.

As if the west wind drove them fast,
O'er peak and plain they come,
And traverse regions wild and vast
As flocks of birds that roam.

Before the looming mist and cloud
Of ghosts in winged array,
The swelling wind soughed sad and loud,
Like Machrihanish Bay.

At length the cloud alighted soft,
As with a hushing sound,
Beneath the throne that stood aloft
O'er all the spectral ground.

Then they defiled before the king
With solemn step and slow,
Awe was the tribute they did bring,
Each face the gift did show.

Rank after rank they marchèd past,
And spread far o'er the hill,
Till Proserpine appeared at last,
With maidens at her will.

It was a fair and stately train
In such a dusky realm,
Like daughters of a king of Spain
At beck of sorrow's helm.

To Proserpine then Pluto spake
In manner mild and free,
"Here stands a man of noble make
Would have a gift from me.

"To win Alcestis back again
From this dark under-world,
To see the sun shine on the main,
And fleets with sails unfurled,

"To share again her husband's love
'Mong hills of Thessaly,
And through long Grecian summers rove
In bliss as I found thee.

"He turned his back on earth's fair face,
On heaven and its light,
And through thick darkness came apace
To brave my dread and might.

"Few are the souls that I release,
Yet may Alcestis go
To King Admetus and to Greece,
Where fragrant west winds blow.

"The spring, my Proserpine, has come,
When, as thy custom is,
Thou goest forth from me and home
To share thy mother's kiss.

"One kiss, my love, then lead the way
Forth from this fluttering throng,
And bring Alcestis into day
With Heracles the strong!"

Right up unto the throne she went,
And there they did embrace,
While sighs escaped had long been pent
Within an iron face.

"Farewell, my love! nor linger thou
When harvest gold is past,
When snow adorns the mountain's brow,
And tempest bends the mast."

Adown the stairway from the throne
Her step was soft and still,
Her hushing foot-falls tip the stone
As snow-flakes touch the hill.

She paused, and turned a searching eye
Upon her train and spake,
"Alcestis! come, bid sorrow fly!
For thee day yet will break.

"Come thou with me and hail the spring,
Behold the sun and moon,
And hear the birds their carols sing
Where streams through woodlands croon!"

Forth from the train she stepping came,
Of graceful form and gait,
I trow she was not halt nor lame
To hear the voice of fate!

"And thou, brave man! return and share
The joy of victory!
And from the gloom of dark despair
Lead forth Alcestis free!"

He bowed to Proserpine, then said,
His face turned to the throne,
"Great Pluto! monarch of the dead,
And realms to sorrow known!

"Thy graceful act, so fraught with joy
To Thessaly and Greece,
The songs of poets will employ
More than the Golden Fleece!

"When Proserpine doth gather flowers
On braes above the sea,
And fair Alcestis haunts the bowers
Of love in Thessaly,

"Then may an echo of their bliss
Reach this thy under-world,
And touch thy soul as breezes kiss
The sails to heaven unfurled!"

To Heracles then Pluto spake,
"Farewell! and seek again
The realm where the day doth break
On mountain and on main!

"Upon my throne I here abide,
Nor seasons' changes know!
Ride thou upon life's heaving tide
While summer breezes blow!

"For thou shalt yet return to me,
Where the winter night is long,
And being is a memory,
The echo of a song!"

Alcestis then came forth and stood
Before the king of hell,
In shadow of the granite rude,
The throne where terrors dwell!

With face pale as the moon may show
In the rift of ebon cloud,
That dimmeth heaven's starry brow,
When the tempest pipeth loud!

She threw her auburn locks behind,
And looked on Pluto's face,
A look had given to the blind
True vision 'neath her gaze!

In modest manner thus she spoke,
"Thy word of grace, O king!
Calls living water from the rock
Through deserts wide to sing!

"Since in thy heart doth pity dwell,
Fair Proserpine is thine,
To mitigate the gloom of hell
With light of life divine!

"As when the brier sweet doth shed
Its fragrance after rain,
And shades of night the scene o'erspread,
While day is on the wane,

"So may thy Proserpine diffuse
Such sweetness through this gloom,
That for her love thou may'st refuse
The realm that suns illume!"

"Fair lady, go! said Pluto then,
"On earth as here below,
A heart like thine it passeth ken,
Wherein such ardours glow!"

Then forth they went upon their way,
Out of the land of shadow,
To meet the face of morning gray,
And sunshine on the meadow.

A little distance from the throne
A gleaming palace stood,
Whose walls were made of granite stone,
Great blocks unhewn and rude.

They passed into this palace great,
Right through a door-way wide,
Where all the wealth of hell's estate
Displayed its gloomy pride.

The roof was spanned with ice sea-green,
Was cold and clear and deep,
And 'neath this high, dread winter screen
Were souls did sorely weep.

Some lay asleep on wreaths of snow,
Drove through the doorless hall,
Where whistling winds did whirling blow
The drifts against the wall!

Slow, dull, red fires burned here and there,
That did obeisance claim
Of shivering ghosts, with eager care
Cowered o'er the feeble flame!

Through avenues 'tween pillars gray
The pilgrims walked along,
As in a wood where gleams of day
Mix with the shades among.

Far, far they travelled through this wood
,Of stone and shade and fire,
While hovered round a spectral brood
Would fain to light aspire.

Beyond this winter hall they went
O'er leagues of frozen dew,
Then over rocks and tufts of bent
Where dwarfish mosses grew.

As on they sped the wind grew warm,
And hotter still it blew,
While darkened with an insect swarm
Of wasps, a horrid crew!

The tribes of ghosts that wandered there,
Oh, respite had they none!
They rushed and ran in their distress,
Sank gasping and undone!

Anon they climbed great mountains high,
Within whose bosom lay
Great bowls of fire, lit up the sky
With lurid gleams of day!

Within those fires tribes toiled amain,
And scanned the heights beyond;
They climbed the rocks, fell down again
Into the glowing ground!

And now and then some might succeed,
As salmon when they leap,
Then rest in lanes along the mead,
Above the boiling deep.

But should a ghost surmount the rim
Of this volcanic bowl,
He needs a swallow's wing to skim
And fly beyond control.

For devils there keep watch and ward
O'er devils in their pain,
Who when their feet regain the sward
Do throw them down again!

With cautious steps the travellers go,
Alcestis, ah, how pale!
As moon that climbs the hills of snow
In some dread winter gale!

Said Proserpine, "Now let us rise
Above this weary sight,
To some great mount salutes the skies
That arch this realm of night!"

A rising ridge forthwith they take,
Fair Proserpine leads on;
They climb as those who seek daybreak,
A kingdom 'neath the dawn!

Then from a peak of rock they view
A speckled land of woe,
Of icy frost that ne'er turns dew,
And fire that mates the snow!

Wide rents were seen out through the dome,
The hollow space above,
Where rays of sun or moon did roam
As ghosts through darkness rove!

As moonbeams in a misty vale
  Suffuse the lingering cloud,
And waterfall's lone echo hail,
  Who answers from her shroud,

So streams the ghostly light in hell
  Has strayed from earth and heaven,
Where sorrow unto woe doth tell
  A crime that ne'er is shriven!

A crime whose plaint doth strike the rock,
  That rings it back again,
Where sin doth sin for ever mock,
  And anguish answers pain!

Along the ridge of mountain land
  They sped 'neath moonlit cloud,
While broke the wind as sea on strand,
  Where billows thunder loud!

Anon the wind would sudden fall,
  And stay the storm severe,
While o'er the stillness came the call
  Of sorrow to the ear.

As in a deep and wooded dell,
  At eve, when all is still,
The owlet's cry or fox's wail
  Thrills echo in the hill,

So struck the wailing voice of hell
  Upon those travellers three,
Or like the far-off rising swell
  Of some great, moaning sea!

Descending slow the gravel slope,
Where startled boulders sped,
With bound on bound, from rock to rock,
Into the valley's bed,

They came unto a fountain great,
Seven wells of boiling wave,
That from the mountain's breast elate
As some wild river drave.

An Amazon to greatness born,
As from the fount it springs,
It rushes on with lips of scorn,
And swift as swallow's wings!

With roar of thunder in its heart,
Its waters rush and rave,
While sudden gleams of moonlight dart
Upon the troubled wave.

Upon its banks the travellers sped,
Between the mountains high,
Where hoary crags frowned overhead
Against the lurid sky.

Upon the waters' heaving breast
Were ships with oar and sail,
That, foaming, cut the billow's crest,
As in a driving gale.

The crews were ghosts of eager mood,
Where hope inflamed despair,
Who thought to reach the ocean flood
That rolls 'neath morning fair.

Woe-worn each ghost, and yet a flush
  Of hope bloomed on each cheek,
As in the east the cloud doth blush
  On which the day doth break.

Ah! false the dawn that bloometh there,
  Hallucination deep,
A hope that worketh for despair,
  And waketh woe from sleep!

Nine days and nights the travellers go
  Along the river's edge,
Where moonbeams now then sunbeams throw
  Their light on sauch and sedge.

Swift fleets of boats for ever pass,
  Both great and small in haste,
As ray and shade bound o'er the grass,
  Each by the other chased.

As wild geese flocks in winter time
  Fly south with steady wing,
And leave behind a frozen clime,
  To seek some living spring!

But these are flocks that far may fly,
  They find no living spring,
But cleave for aye a winter sky
  Where speeds no swallow's wing!

As when the tide in thunder roars
  Across Loch Etive bar,
The traveller hears the waters hoarse,
  Loud-swelling, from afar,

When forth they haste to reach the sea,
Dunstaffnage Castle past,
So sudden heard those travellers three
Wild thunder on the blast!

The wind had swept adown the stream,
Now up the wave it blew,
And bore along the petrel's scream
And wail of shipwrecked crew!

Anon the travellers reach the scene
Where pour descending floods,
And silver spray as cloud doth screen
The gulf where terror broods!

Right down into a yawning chasm,
O'er snags of dismal rocks,
The waters fall in foaming spasm,
Where echo anguish mocks!

Across the brink of glassy wave
The ghostly fleet slides down,
With yell and scream, into a grave
Where woes each other drown!

The travellers wind a weary way
Across this living death,
O'er rugged rocks and blinding spray,
Hell's river underneath.

Bèneath their feet low murmurs boom,
Now rise, then fall away,
Like thunder with a voice of doom
That traverses the day!

Then Heracles to Proserpine,
With speech enquiring, said,
"What ghosts are these that sudden tine
The light o'er hell is shed?"

"In dungeons deep they buried men,
Of envy, hate, and fear,
And if by luck they 'scaped the den,
For freedom they paid dear.

"Bloodhounds upon their track were sent,
That bore an evil doom,
Brought back they were from moor and bent
To deeper dungeon gloom!

"And thus the men that murdered hope,
And slew joy at the birth,
Who crushed young freedom, now must grope
Through disembowelled earth!

"Unnumbered leagues they driven are
Within the hidden wave;
The faintest gleam of dimmest star
Ne'er lights their living grave!

"At length this river finds the light,
Such light as shines in hell,
And throws these ghosts up from the night,
All blanched with death's dread spell!

"'Tis but a sleep, the heavy sleep
That utter woe doth hold!
They wake at last, and wake to weep
The loss of hope's fair gold!

"They wander o'er a desert vast,
Lo, hope beguiles again!
Her mirage in their sky is cast,
And captivates their pain!

"Lo, hills and streams and gardens fair
Rise o'er the enchanted line!
They haste them then, fain would be there
Where hell and sky combine!

"As camels haste when they behold
A fountain glitter sheen,
The which the desert doth enfold,
And rush with ardour keen,

"So run those ghosts, forlorn and wan,
Straight for the mead like bees;
A dream it is evades the span
That fain would treasure seize!

"As from the sky-line fades the bow
The wandering schoolboy seeks,
When he arrives and comes to know
Wise Nature's wiles and freaks,

"So fades away their Eden fair!
And lo! a gloomy wood,
Where serpents coil in evil lair,
And rear a hideous brood!

"A weary tract of wilderness
That day can never know,
They leave the trail of dire distress
As wounded hare on snow!

"But forty years, an age, expires,
They search the forest through,
And in the open kindle fires,
Around their camp the dew.

"Strange, strange, to say! hope wakes again,
Her silver trumpet blows,
Throws fairy sunshine on the rain,
As Spring's breath on the snows!

"They journey on with hearts elate,
Through dells, o'er mountains high,
As men with fortune who debate,
Who gold with courage buy!

"Anon they reach that fountain deep,
A river's cradle wide,
And see again its waters leap
Out from the mountain's side.

"Nor do they recognize the wave
Erewhile their eyes had seen,
But launch their boat anew to brave
The ruin that had been!"

When Proserpine thus answer made,
Great Heracles grew pale;
The roses into lilies fade
At tidings fraught with bale!

When she had done, the underground
Deep thunder died away,
As, off the scent, the grim bloodhound
Speeds, baying, from his prey.

Long, long in silence marched they on!
As o'er Sahara's sand,
Until they saw what seemed the dawn
Bloom o'er that nether land!

And as they sped a voice was heard
Like some Æolian chime,
The sweet refrain of some old bard
Who sang of early time!

"Oh, happy they who hell and woe have known!
Have felt the pulse of grief and heard the groan
Of heavy, fell despair!
At length to reach the gate of light and day,
To climb the tree of life and haste away
To breathe the upper air!

"Oh, could I climb with you and feel the breeze
That o'er Olympus blows, and Grecian seas,
And stray where hunters go!
For long the night that broods o'er barren sand,
And grim the fate that wears the fiery brand
That dooms to endless woe!

"And when you leave this realm of gloom behind,
Be sure you banish hell out of the mind,
Lest it becloud your day!
For evil has its root within the heart,
And heaven is his who doth from sin depart,
And seeketh God alway!"

"Through that lorn soul the great high Father
speaks,
And points the way to him who virtue seeks,
And life deserves the name;
Foretells a happier time for sons of men,
When millions blest shall 'scape this deadly den
And win immortal fame!

"When, Heracles, your fame and mine shall pass
Like morning dew that gleams on tender grass,
Or lilies from their prime,
On heights above Olympus they shall dwell,
Above the gods, whose heaven sinks to hell,
For evermore their time!"

Thus Proserpine: and then she sped,
The morning in her eye,
As one who prison darkness fled,
And sought some mountain high!

At length they reached what seemed the dawn,
A cleft in nether sky,
Where daylight's sweet effulgence shone—
A radiance from on high.

And in the centre stood a tree,
Was wide of girth and tall
As any wonder you may see
Take shape at Fancy's call.

Its knotted roots spread far around
With intertwisting might,
And held in grasp the underground
That based its giant height.

Wide as the pyramid that throws
O'er sand the shade of years,
High as a mount whose Alpine snows
The young moon's sickle shears.

The tree did fill the spacious sphere,
While rose its mighty stem
Up from the realm of gloom and fear,
Earth's morning light to claim.

With steps its back was dinted deep—
The steps of Proserpine,
Where upward she was wont to leap
For days of auld lang syne.

To Heracles she said, "Step forth!
Be leader of the trio;
This honour to thy manly worth,
Thou brave and gallant hero!"

He leads the way, they follow fast,
And high and higher climb,
As up a huge and towering mast
Of height and girth sublime.

The branches that around are spread
Do golden apples bear,
While fragrant blossoms ever shed
Their summer snow so fair.

The birds that sit the boughs amid
Sing out a pleasant song,
While echo from her cavern hid
The sweetness doth prolong.

Nine days they travelled up the tree,
Nine nights they slept in bower,
And heard the soughing of the sea
Sweep round the nightly hour.

At dawn they ate the apples sweet
Around the bower that hung,
And then with bounding step, and fleet,
Their upward way they swung.

At length they from a bough that grew
Above a spring in Phocis,
Castalia called, leaped on the dew
That gleamed on mount Parnassus!

Alcestis' cheeks were pale, I trow,
Like sloe-thorn bloom in May,
Or like the gleam of frozen snow
Where lonely moonbeams stray,

When first she followed Heracles
Up from the land of gloom;
Now in her cheeks the life-blood plays
Within a rosy bloom!

Through groves of myrtle and of balm,
Of healing plants and flowers,
They wander on in blissful calm,
Where browse the noon-day hours.

Through mead and vale and silver stream,
And over hills they wander,
Alcestis walking in a dream,
Entranced with joy and wonder.

When lo! upon a sylvan height,
Where flowers and myrtles grew,
A palace high of marble white,
Alcestis saw and knew.

The mansion of Admetus this!
She hastes, and leads the way,
To hail again the marriage bliss
Of an old-world day!

Admetus sees them from afar,
Right joyous at the sight,
As watchman sees the morning star
Shine through dissolving night!

He hastens from the sounding hall,
His men they follow fast,
And with the horn on echo call
In many a stirring blast!

Brave Heracles, as he drew near,
Addressed the King, and said—
"How goes the hunt, where stray the deer,
On mountain or in glade?

"Here is the prey I've won for thee,
From sorrow none may tell!
Alcestis, now in Thessaly,
Was hostage once in hell!

"Nay, Proserpine herself has come,
Who led us to the light,
With venturous steps to this thy home
Built over death and night!"

"Tidings, indeed, ye angels bring!
My soul rare transports throng,
With such a tale was ever king
Greeted in bardic song?

"And thou, Alcestis! oh, my love!
Hast thou returned to me,
To dwell again in life's green grove,
Where warblers sing with glee?"

He kissed her there, and held her fast
In firm and warm embrace—
"Is this a dream will soon be past,
Or do I see her face?

"This is her calm and alpine brow,
With clouds of golden hair,
These eyes whose depths the starlight show,
These cheeks that roses bear!

"Oh speak, Alcestis! let me hear
That these are lips I know!
Nor thou a vision one may fear
Will at the daybreak go!"

Then sweet as evening's breeze that blows
Across the new-mown hay,
And bears the voice of stream that flows
Where snow-white lambkins play,

She spake, and kissed him as she spake,
"Admetus, I am thine
In flesh and blood, nor may'st thou wake
O'er vanished bliss to pine!"

With joyous steps then forth they sped
And passed into the hall;
Rare was the feast that there was spread,
All earth and sea at call!

The feast was rare, but rarer far
The story that was told
When Heracles, the man of war,
Rehearsed his venture bold.

The feast was done, the tale was told,
The moon far down the west,
When he, Alcestis, as of old,
Led to her bridal nest.

To-morrow Proserpine will go,
In summer fields will revel,
And Heracles will arm, I trow,
For other feats of travail.

But never unto sons of men
Such treasure may they bring,
Or out of loss recover gain
Like this, thy love, O king!

Oh, favourite of fortune rare,
Possessor of such bliss!
What mortal may with thee compare,
Who twice won love like this!

TO WINTER.

O, Winter gray, O, Winter gray,
With frozen beard of ice and snow,
While swirling tempests round thee play,
Meek earth and man would have thee go!
The sheep are pining on the fell,
The plough is rusting in the dell,
And birds perch dumb upon the bough!

I go, I go, but not for thee,
I hear a voice that sounds from far,
The whisper of a sunlit sea
That ripples 'neath fair summer's car.
The clouds are rising in the west,
Will gild with foam the billows' crest,
And flood the waters with my snow!

The news is good, O hoary king!
Yet blame we not thy frosty reign,
Whose joys the boisterous curlers sing
In laughing and hilarious strain;
While ring the skates o'er glassy seas,
And sleighs with bells enrich the breeze
With love and dreams of bliss to be!

Thy moon and stars are setting fast,
Speed thou with them to yonder west!
Behind the hills thy lot is cast,
Where Autumn's grapes are being prest,
While waggons rattle though the plain
Encumbered with the golden grain—
That harvest-home will welcome thee!

Then with an arch and knowing look,
He said—"I will return again."
I knew it well, but ill could brook,
That gaze of mirth was fraught with pain,
A ruthless and a freezing arrow
That sundered joints and pierced the marrow
Of tender joy that feareth death!

He turned and hastened in the wind,
His gray plaid soaking with the sleet,
As on he sped a land to find
Where he might rear a crystal seat,
The earth enrobe with spotless snow,
And hush to rest the torrent's flow
Beneath the spell of freezing breath!

Return, old Winter, if you may!
Though deep your frost it cannot freeze
The fountains warm where fire hath sway,
Nor sleeping flowers that wait the breeze
Of genial Spring, who sings a song,
A 'trancing lay, the whole day long—
Bids life arrive and mock the grave!

Thou camest last, born gaunt and old!
With creaking steps on earth's green breast,
Thy foot-marks white and icy cold;
Night, storm, and death at thy behest;
A pack of wolves that scour the plain,
And howl within the whirlwind's train,
Where wreck and ruin hoarsely rave!

Go, Winter, go to other lands,
  Where Ruth has gleaned the fields of corn!
Bind them as with Orion's bands!
  Spring enters here at gate of morn,
A robe of mist on shoulders white,
Her breast with snowdrops all bedight,
  A primrose wreath upon her brow!

Return again! What should I care
  If I but quaff the living wave
Flows from the Throne? whose virtue rare
  Gives life that frost and death can brave!
Who drink will reach the realm of spring,
Where flies cuckoo, nor swallow's wing
  E'er flits before thy driving snow!

THE LASS AMANG THE CRAIGS O' KYLE.

Comin' through the Craigs o' Kyle,
  Whaur heather bloomed in auld lang syne,
And woman's sang did man beguile,
  That time and heart he baith did tine,

I met a bonnie, winsome lass,
  As fair a flower as ever grew,
And sweet as summer clover grass
  That sparkles wi' the mornin' dew.

Fleet as the roe she steps the green,
  Fair as the moon that gilds the night,
With radiant locks, and eyes serene
  As heaven's blue in starry light.

O, happy he who wins her love,
And suns his heart beneath her smile;
Hand linked in hand as forth they rove
Amang the scaurs and craigs o' Kyle!

LIA FAIL—THE STONE OF DESTINY.

Oh, Lia Fail! unlike thy chiselled home,
A stranger thou, say, whither thou has come
To dwell among the dead in state!
The seat of princes called the British throne
Is stayed on thee, thou gray, mysterious stone,
Inscrutable and weird as fate!

The stone it spoke, and through the solemn hall
Of tombs illustrious did echo call,
And whisper down the stairs of time
Urania's voice, the word of changeless truth,
The same to-day as in the world's youth,
High Heaven's rule in every clime!

"I am the Stone of Destiny, they say,
And such I am as under Heaven's sway,
Nor less subservient are men
To purpose high proceeding from the throne,
That guides the world, as it guides the stone,
In mode surpassing mortal ken!

"As to my origin, they frame for me
An aureole, a fabulous pedigree,
As if I were indeed the stone

Whereon the pilgrim Jacob leaned his head
One night at Luz, when he from Esau fled
With staff in hand, an exile lone.

"But, truth to tell, I hail from north the Tweed,
A land of mountains, where the red deer feed
On brae and moor and dimpled lea;
Where pass Dunstaffnage on their outward rush
Loch Etive's waves, with thunder's prideful flush
O'er falls of Lora to the sea!

"The throne of Scottish kings from ancient date,
On me they sat, received their crowns of state,
And hailed their coronation day.
Reigns long, and brief, I saw them come and go,
Like autumn's purple bloom and winter snow—
The feet of years—stole soft away!

"A grasping king of England, Edward, rose,
By guile and force inflicted grievous woes
On freedom's bleeding heart!
He bore me off, and royal records all,
That Scotland, tranced beneath oblivion's pall,
Might sleep unconscious of her smart!

"Her champion, Wallace, by a traitor sold
To Edward's hate with hell-alluring gold,
By cruel hands to death was done!
His heart torn out, alive did naked beat,
And freedom's trumpet claim did then repeat
Before great Heaven's glowing sun!

"When Bruce recovered freedom for the land,
That gladly owned his wise, paternal hand,
But did the grasping Edward's spurn,
The champion's plea was heard as England's host
Was overthrown, despite their haughty boast,
Upon the field of Bannockburn!

"A treaty then was made whose terms did claim
For Scotland freedom and the Bruce fair fame,
The theme that moves the harper's strings!
And one condition of the treaty was,
That I should be restored to Scotland's cause,
The crowning throne of future kings!

"The English rose, refused to let me go,
And to the bargain made they answered, No!
Thus did they then their honour brand!
And oft in after times, contemning right,
Has England wrought with proud and wanton might
Against the partner of her hand!

"And thus her haughty pride doth alienate
All honest hearts, that evermore must hate
The tyrant's rod and lip of scorn!
And as the Stone of Destiny, I say,
That truth and right at last shall win the day,
The plumes of fraud and falsehood shorn!

"And now a king ascends the British throne
Who claims a title honour must disown,
As that which truth would override;
A title that ignores, and doth affront
A nation that has stood the battle's brunt
And won, to feed the Cockney's pride.

"Of Edwards, this may be the seventh whose sway
Extends from Tweed to sands of Cornwall Bay,
From Solway unto Dover's Strait.
This is the first doth Scotia's homage win,
Edward the First, a name befits his kin,
His Scottish blood and royal state!

"Edward the first o'er Britain's empire wide,
A name well worth the wearer's honest pride,
Commends itself to truth and sense,
A tribute due to Scotia's loyal heart,
The other name is fraud's empoisoned dart,
And brazen lips that flaunt offence.

"Were England wise, and would recall to mind
The sacredness of compact that doth bind
All souls magnanimous and great,
She would regard the plea of justice high
And spotless truth, the daughters of the sky,
All fearless then of frowning fate!"

Then ceased the voice, the echo died away,
And silence reigned within her mansion gray
And cold with frost of time and stone!
But still within my heart that echo rings,
The voice of truth to peasants and to kings,
Claim more than right and lose thine own!

IN MEMORY OF JOHN HARPER, FURMISTON, CARSPHAIRN,

WHO WAS BORN 18TH AUGUST, 1810, AND DIED 24TH AUGUST, 1898.

OLD Furmiston has passed away,
His form on earth no more we view,
And poorer now is Galloway
Of hearts of sterling worth and true.

Nigh ninety years he saw the sun,
The moon and stars round heaven wind;
And now his pilgrim march is done,
A wilderness of time behind!

Where Enterkin and Dalveen meet,
The murmuring streams and babbling rills,
He first beheld the sunshine sweet
Stream through the shadows of the hills.

Nigh thirty years of life he spent
Upon the moors of Durisdeer,
And brushed the dew from off the bent,
As up the steep his steps did steer.

'Mong scenes where martyrs' blood was shed,
Where floated stories of Kirkbride,
And hallowed memories of the dead,
His spirit felt the sacred tide.

'Twas there into a man he grew,
Alert and swift and tireless he;
To mate his step there were but few
Of all who scoured the fell and lea.

With Roman nose 'tween falcon eyes,
That grew not dim for ninety years;
'Neath bushy brows they viewed the skies,
And saw save when they gazed through tears.

With forward chin and manly brow,
And air decisive for the fray,
Like to an arrow from the bow,
That swerves not, so he held his way.

O'er Nith and scaur to Moniaive,
Adown the face of steep Dunreggan,
Then up Craigdarroch glen belyve,
He crossed the Ken beyond Stroanfreggan.

Then by Muirdrockwood and Muirscalloch,
Upon his left the roar of Deugh,
Where foaming waves with many a walloch
Bound o'er the rocks to night's dark sheugh.

At length to Furmiston he came,
Upon the fork 'tween Deugh and Ken,
Where sixty years John Harper's name
Was loved and honoured in the glen.

He reared his flocks, a farmer good,
Be-south Cairnsmore and Inner Ben,
And in his home found berth and food
The weary tribe of wandering men.

Alike the shepherd and the lord,
The peasant and the squire they knew
The kindly heart and honest word
Of manhood, Presbyterian blue.

The joy of wedded life was his
About the noontide of his day,
The fragrance of a transient bliss,
Like hawthorn blossom on the spray.

Death plucked in haste the full-blown rose,
And left two buds to cheer the father,
As honeysuckle sweetly grows
Around the nest that has no mother.

One grew a maiden sweet and fair,
The image of her father's mind,
Who wedded life at length did share,
Love's transient feast and pleasure blind.

She passed away, and left to grief
A husband and a father lorn,
The naked tree without a leaf,
Nor any bud upon the thorn.

His only son took ship and sailed,
With wife and children far away,
Until Australian land they hailed,
Wide seas 'tween them and Galloway.

Long years the fell he lonely trod,
From son and daughter distant far,
One 'neath the southern Cross abode,
The other yont the utmost star!

His flocks he tended on the hill,
And friends he saw both far and near,
His bounteous hand would poortith fill
With welcome aid and blithe good cheer.

Nor could a heart as warm as his,
That felt the wants and woes of men,
Be friendless here, or lack the bliss
Of love returned from hill and glen.

Around him close the household stood,
Bound fast by ties of loyalty,
As kindred, sharers of his blood,
Through kindness sworn to fealty.

When dew was on the fields of spring,
And song within the budding wood,
He saw that life was on the wing,
And soon would fly beyond the flood!

Upon the lap of Cairnsmore high,
Both fair and strong a plane-tree grew,
Its bole ascended to the sky,
And boughs on earth broad shadow threw.

And when the tree began to fail,
As time's gray breath bedimmed the bark,
And still with less response would hail
The cuckoo's note and soaring lark,

Before the woodman's axe it fell,
Was framed into a lowly bed,
Of fashion fair, where dust might dwell
In silence dark when life has fled.

With brazen mountings clear and bright,
The coffin waited for its claim,
A thing of beauty to the sight,
If one could but forget its aim.

For death he did not long, nor cast
Despite on life oppressed with years,
But bore his burden to the last
With faith that overcame his fears.

With calm reliance on the Lord,
On Christ who died upon the tree,
He rested on the faithful word
Of Him who rules eternity.

An August morn at break of day,
He took his staff and journeyed west,
Unseen, and fleet as light, away
From yon green braes on Cairnsmore's breast!

The funeral train was slow and long,
As to Carsphairn, else named the Green,
It sought the grave, and stood a throng
Of life-long friends from many a scene.

We laid him in his last long home,
Asleep within his polished bed,
Where change of season may not come
Until the rising of the dead!

The Deugh may roll for ages yet
Around the skirts of Cairnsmore high,
The lark may sing at heaven's gate
Of spring arrived and summer nigh;

While Furmiston will take his sleep
  All heedless he of sheep and lambs,
Of storms that over Cairnsmore sweep,
  Or maggot flies in sultry calms!

Yet sure as Deugh will meet the Ken,
  One fortune in their blended wave,
So judgment waits the sons of men,
  And resurrection from the grave!

And he who walked the sun-lit road
  Of equity and love and truth,
Within his heart the fear of God,
  The springs of pity and of ruth,

May take his rest and slumber deep,
  Where Deugh's soft murmur warbles on:
He will not wake o'er woe to weep
  Whose grief with yester-eve has gone!

NANCY'S ASCENT OF BEN CLEUGH.

The month of May comes round again,
  The dew is glistening on the green,
From belts of wood the cuckoo's strain
  Flies midway heaven and earth between.

In glad and winsome youth's array,
He sees and lauds thee, Nancy, dear!
And cries throughout the valley gay,
That summer's queen is here.

Come let us spend the golden hours
Where lonely waters pensive stray,
While high in air the curlew pours
Abroad his wild and untaught lay!

She answered, "Yea," and then we sought
The gorge o'er Tillycoultrie Mills;
By scaur and stream our way we fought
Sidelong among the Ochil hills.

We led the way, Nancy and I,
Her father followed, musing deep
On news of kingdoms far and nigh,
While broiling up the slippy steep.

The day was hot, the sun was bright,
The springs were low and crystal streams,
Far gathered from each cleugh and height,
Strayed through the glen where silence dreams.

But still the pilgrims climb and climb,
The down-drag of the earth despite,
And from Ben Cleugh's high throne sublime
A far, fair realm rewards the sight.

The swifts, dark swallows, circle round
The summit of Ben Cleugh and say,
Abide with us on this high ground,
Where summer's tent is pitched to-day!

O swallow ! swallow ! who may rest
And be at home who waits on thee ?
Though now thy wing is o'er the nest,
Soon thou wilt fly across the sea.

The curlew's cry, the cuckoo's call,
Alas ! alas ! will vanish soon,
And freezing snow in iron thrall
The Ochil mountains 'neath the moon.

We may not linger on the height.
In vain that flitting wing we follow ;
Too swift a guide for our dim sight,
And leaden feet, this summer swallow !

We turned our back upon Ben Cleugh,
O'er moor and moss we sped along,
And down into the narrow sheugh
Where Sorrow croons her plaintive song.

Down, down we went, of view bereft,
Where Sorrow's waters run or sleep,
Sky-thorn and White-wisp on our left,
And on our right the King's Seat steep.

As Nancy links along the brae,
With beauteous youth in mien and motion,
Methinks she is a swallow gay
As ever measured land or ocean.

We may not reach the Castle Gloom
That stands amid the woody hollow,
Where Care, a wrinkled, sombre groom,
Finds fitting bride in rueful Sorrow.

Nay, nay, my lass! we cross the stream
While pure as crystal is its flow,
And leave it like a transient dream
Of grief in sleep morn may not know.

Your father will not fail to prove
The course of Sorrow till her fate
Is wed with Care, and then he'll rove
By Dolor burn when it is late.

Across the limpid wave we sped,
And up and down the Ochil scaurs,
Deep wounds were made by tempests dread,
The sword-cuts of old winter wars.

We skirted round the hill anon
Upon a sod-clad ancient road,
Where pilgrims of the ages gone
Sped lightly forth, or bore their load.

The lilt of joy and grief's low wail,
The weary foot of age and sorrow,
And youth's light step did bravely scale
The Ochil steep of cloud-capped morrow,

Have vanished all and left no trace
Of aught to earth they would bequeath;
All vanished like the deer herd chase
Of life before the hunter death!

What means thy moralizing mood,
Thy backward look on yesterday,
Thou timid bard that feared the wood,
And climbed the hill in light to stay?

See Nancy skipping on before,
The dawn of youth within her eye;
No lovelier were the days of yore
Than that which beams from this May sky!

Thereon we hasten down the steep,
O'er gray, stone dyke, through woodland shade,
To Devon View our faces keep,
And lightly trip o'er lea and mead.

The home is reached upon the brae,
That overlooks the Devon vale,
The while we hear the cuckoo's lay,
The same as did the morning hail.

True welcome met the wandering pair
From Mary and her mother wise,
Who love and grace and beauty wear
As natives of the higher skies.

And like unto an April breeze
That plays before the face of morn,
Or wind that twirls summer leaves,
Or rustles through the golden corn,

Throughout the garden and the lawn
Their youngest sister skips and plays,
The Benjamina of the Dawn,
Encircled with unsullied rays.

A silent fear restrains the joy,
Though dumb, 'tis felt by all, I wis,
The fateful thread of dim alloy
That veins the gold of human bliss.

For father is not home, though day
Is quickly sinking in the west,
The while his footsteps lonely stray
By waves with Care and Sorrow prest.*

But lo! he comes with voice of cheer,
And step elastic to the gate,
Joy reassured, and banished fear,
All gathered home ere it is late!

For, brave of heart, he sped along,
Nor lingered in the dowie dell,
Nor sank beneath the spectral throng
Of gloomy thoughts that handsel hell.

May they be blest, fair Devon View!
Who sit around thy cheerful hearth,
Their sky this May day's purest blue,
Above a paradise of earth!

And sure I am, where Christ abides,
And whispering saith, "My peace be here,"
That home is blest whate'er betides,
And earth again has heavenly cheer.

And wheresoe'er our footsteps rove,
From dewy vale to mountain height,
Or down again through glen and grove,
May we all meet as here to-night!

* Sorrow and Care are streams that flow down each side of Castle Gloom. Sky-thorn, White-wisp, and King's Seat are mountains.

THE SEMI-JUBILEE OF THE REV'D. W. B. B. WILSON,

DOLLAR, 25TH JANUARY, 1897.

THE life of man has many a sphere,
Wherein to work and wear its time,
And spend the seasons of its year
From April dew to winter rime;
But more than all a shepherd's lot
With honest toil and joy is fraught,
Whose day inspires a mood sublime,
Upon the Ochil mountains green.

The day breaks o'er the eastern sea,
And gilds the Lomonds with its smile,
While shades dismayed, far westward flee
Beyond the mountains of Argyle;
And glowing morn illumes the braes,
That guard the Devon while she plays,
And sings a song would time beguile,
As round she skirts the Ochils green.

He tends his flock upon the height,
On White Wisp ridge or King's Seat bold,
On Skye-thorn peak in mid-day light,
Or high Ben Cleugh's proud, rocky fold;
Where song or silence is at large,
And lulls to rest his fleecy charge,
While snow-flaked Grampians view the sight
Of summer on the Ochils green.

Now five-and-twenty years have fled,
  Since first my brother Wilson chose
The shepherd's crook, and forthwith sped
  To climb the braes where Dollar flows,
And feed the sheep far up and down,
Where grass is green and heather brown,
  And simples rare for him who knows
    The secret of the Ochils green.

A man of mark for mind and lore,
  In mould heroic, firmly cast,
Who muses deep on things before,
  And knows the footsteps of the past,
He leads his flock where waters flow,
And finds them pasture high and low,
  Where sits the calm or drives the blast
    Across the Ochil mountains green.

With strength of arm and strength of soul,
  The gift of heaven to whom it saith,
Christ Jesus makes thee true and whole,
  The folk he tends and shields from scaith;
A bold, outspoken, honest seer,
Who dwells upon the summit clear,
  Commends the truth with heartfelt faith,
    Firm set as Ochil mountains green.

And what a flock he hefts with skill!
  And watchful zeal, days dark and clear,
Far gathered sheep from many a hill
  That throws its shadow on earth's sphere;
From lands where summer ever glows,
And regions of eternal snows,
  From gardens fair and deserts drear,
To feed on Ochil mountains green.

From red-wood forests of the west,
Waved in the wind shook Adam's bower;
From Himalaya's snowy crest
Where new-born rivers leap and roar;
From Afric's wastes, and rivers lone,
Have strayed from Mountains of the Moon,
Far travelled sheep their rest explore
In dimples of the Odhils green.

'Tis true that Care and Sorrow flow
Through glens within these verdant hills,
And Castle Gloom dense shade doth throw
O'er streams that harp on human ills;
But yet though Care and Sorrow wed,
And blend their wave's in Dolor's bed,
Strath Devon's joy the woodland fills,
And warbles round the Ochils green.

His flock doth prove that God hath made
Of one blood nations dark and fair,
Who dwell by mount or forest glade,
In gardens rich or deserts bare;
One remedy the cross of Christ,
Of God and man the place of tryst,
Where mortals find celestial fare,
And youth as Ochil mountains green.

According to their pasture filled,
The flock declare the gang is good,
And one who in the art is skilled
Prepares for them their Sabbath food;
And hence this semi-jubilee
Of mutual felicity,
Bears bloom and fruit like Aaron's rood,
Before these Ochil mountains green.

In days of old a man of Greece
Sailed eastward o'er the Black Sea's wave,
To win a rare and golden fleece,
The prize of such as perils brave ;
Who through a thousand dangers go,
Of desert, flood, and driven snow,
As realms unblest beyond the grave,
Unlike these Ochil mountains green.

But here a flock of generous mind
Their shepherd dower with liberal hand,
A golden fleece of richer kind
Than ever grew in Colchis land !
For him who toiled, nor had regard
To treasure-trove as his reward,
This golden fleece, at love's command,
Is grown upon these Ochils green.

And though he now returns the fleece,
To widen and adorn the fold,
The love of which it speaks is his,
The sterling and untarnished gold ;
The Koh-i-nur upon his breast,
Will light his footsteps going west,
Unto the realm of bliss untold,
Far, far beyond these Ochils green !

Nor can we miss his help-meet true,
Of gifts and graces rarely given,
Whose presence is a precious dew
Of shining pearl in Strath Devon ;
Whose wit and wisdom blent with love
Wear sheen and shimmer as the dove,
That soars into an azure heaven,
Above the sun-lit Ochils green.

Long may she live to shine and bless
The hill above, the strath below,
As breeze of spring whose kind caress
Upon the braes the flock well know;
And with her husband share the joy
Of triumph that has no alloy,
The love whose flame's unsullied glow
Will shine when Ochils are no more!

THE MEETING OF THE WATERS.

When sank the sun yont Queensberry hill,
And closed a fair September day,
I wandered lone in evening still,
Where Annan's waters gently stray.

Upon Hartfell the shadow grew,
And dim became the Ettrick Pen,
From peak and vale blithe day withdrew,
And left with night the sons of men!

But as I roamed in twilight gray,
And mused with pensive step and slow,
And felt the touch of sere decay
As autumn tree when chill winds blow!

Two maidens, children of the dawn,
Arrayed in tresses of the night,
Came tripping o'er the shady lawn,
And left behind the glow-worm's light.

Oh! mild the light within their eyes,
And on their cheeks what smiles did play!
A vision fair, and one that flies
Where love and beauty may not stay!

"Fair maids!" quoth I, "if you may know
The way to meeting of the waters,
Where Evan, Annan, Moffat flow,
Linked hand in hand, three lovely daughters!

"Oh! fain would I your steps attend,
As o'er the dewy vale ye speed,
And mark the waters as they blend
Their waves in song adown the mead!"

Then one with sage and pensive face,
And hazel eyes where slumbered loves,
While blushing smiles in eager chase
Flew o'er her cheeks like wings of doves,

Took speech and said, "Come now, and see
Three waters keep their tryst together,
Where chime the waves in harmony,
And roll in silver song for ever!"

And then her sister sweetly spoke,
Within her eye a sparkling glow,
That gleamed upon the raven lock
Hung loose upon her snowy brow!

"Yea, come!" she said, "though light should fail,
We still may walk in summer bowers,
Let converse sweet our hearts regale,
And youth be thine as it is ours!"

And, truth to tell, as on we sped,
And listened to the voice of eve,
Where whispers soft in silence bred
Of prison gloom take gladsome leave!

I could have wished the journey long
Ere I had seen the meeting waters,
Nor hankered for their blended song
While placed between love's winsome daughters!

But time and space, too brief they were!
We overtook the meeting waters;
But in the presence of the fair
I saw but them, love's winsome daughters!

The waters met, and journeyed on,
Nor ever fear to part had they;
But ah! too soon I went alone,
Love's daughters gone, far, far away!

Oh, happy he who finds the one
Or other of these maidens fair:
Of Adam's race a favoured son,
His portion worth and beauty rare!

And yet as from a dimpled hill
Three waters rise into the day,
And listen each the other's rill,
As forth they speed upon their way,

Aud stray apart, while hiding deep
Each in its own appointed vale,
To come again with wimpling sweep,
And blend their voices in the gale;

So may we three sweet meeting find
In some green dell when it is spring,
Hoar winter gone, while in the wind
The mavis and the merle sing!

IN MEMORY OF JAMES BARBOUR, GLENDARROCH,

Who Died 21st September, 1899.

Hush! Ken, thy stormy voice, the troubled roar
Of waters gathered from the thunder cloud,
Bemoan his death whose loss all hearts deplore!
For he who loved thee slumbers in his shroud,
Nor e'er will see again thy proud, red wave,
Or hear thy silver ripple flowerets lave!

Beside the Ken upon a terrace green,
A mansion stands that overlooks the stream,
There he abode, and viewed a lovely scene,
As fair as Eden in a poet's dream,
Above a wiel of Ken, whose deep, dark waves
Abruptly pause before the land of graves.

A good man and a just, he spent his time,
Nigh fourscore, hale and strong from first to last,
Within the limits of his native clime,
Where Galloway's gray hills oppose the blast,
And shield within their arms the valley green,
Where lochs and silver streams adorn the scene.

In dimple of the vale, where one might hear
The Garpol humming in his rocky bed,
He first saw light, and marked the circling year
Of changeful days that o'er the mountains sped ;
While oft afield the vagrant boy would stray
On braes of Bogue the livelong summer day !

Upon ancestral acres, where his sires
Had lived and thought and used the poet's pen,
And with old-world tales revived the fire
Of antiquarian lore above the Ken,
With toiling hand he lived a farmer true,
And stored his mind with treasures known to few.

He joined the banker's to the farmer's art,
The patriot's zeal unto the scholar's lore,
And with the wisdom of a loving heart
Advised the rich, considered well the poor :
And while he saw the past in fair array,
With graceful deeds he draped the present day.

He was a tree whose roots struck deep, and drew
Their nurture from the breast of honest fame,
A stock of sires whose memory was dew
That quickened worth as oil doth feed the flame ;
Whose deeds of valour and of faith sublime
Men will rehearse until the end of time.

When Bruce upon the field of Bannockburn
Drew up his men to conquer or to die,
Each soul, a flame, did death and darkness spurn,
With radiance keen like stars in winter sky,
As on the Bore Stone set the banner waved,
A Barbour kept it there, all danger braved !

And in his heart where pulsed the patriot blood,
The Covenanter's life flowed deep and full,
The strain of her who faced the stormy flood
Of sea and hateful men on day of dule,
Jean Wilson, young and fair, who for her faith
In Christ the Lord, encountered dread and death!

A tree he was whose leaf was ever green,
On boughs whose fruit bespoke a heavenly clime,
The fruit of truth and love and faith serene,
That grew more mellow with the breath of time:
A tree that shelter gave and many fed,
And promised fair to stand while seasons fled!

But luckless man and blind, he cannot guage,
With all his boasted skill, the tempest rude,
That from the breast of calm doth rise and rage,
And prostrate lay the glory of the wood;
What winds from all the corners of the air
Leap forth and smite the festive palace fair!

So sudden was the angry blast that laid
This goodly tree beneath the harvest moon,
As through the clouds amid the stars she strayed,
While from the valley rose Ken's eerie croon,
And sighs of men as Cushi swiftly ran
And whispered tidings with his lips so wan!

St. John's Dalry, the village on the brae,
That hails the west wind from the Rhinns of Kells,
And marks the sunlit cloud upon Millyea,
Or thunder of the linn when Ken's wave swells,
No more may see the well-known form and face,
Whose presence was a blessing on the place!

His partner left behind and kindred dear,
  His flesh and blood that feel this painful wrench,
Who mourn your loss and shed the silent tear,
  Grieve not as those whose hope the grave can quench!
But look on high, for he has gone before,
And lives in youth and bliss for evermore!

Yes! he is gone, within whose heart was writ
  The name of Galloway in golden flame,
A Christian Scot, a man of grace and grit,
  A living well within a granite frame;
Now he is gone, may others rise and rear
The standard of a life that men revere!

THE LIGHT OF MEN.

Tune—"Israel," 204 in Hymnary. (Repeat last line in each verse.)

Oh! light is sweet fair heaven's eye!
  And life to him enthralled by night,
Beneath a moonless, starless sky,
  Where pits and crags his soul affright,
And beasts of prey disturb the gloom!

Fair dawn appears, and lights her fire
  In yonder east 'tween curtains gray;
Its rosy flames to heaven aspire,
  And from his hammock springs forth day,
Where late he swung 'tween bars of cloud!

At birth of day night tucked her robe
  Round ebon limbs and journeyed west,
Pursued by day around the globe,
  In ceaseless flight afar from rest ;
No home for her the world wide !

Then may I walk with light and day,
  As ever west my footsteps go,
And night, retreating, haste away,
  As cloud that fading from the brow
Of morn foretells a glorious noon !

Thou Son of God ! the light of men !
  Shine on my soul, I humbly pray,
Through time to come by mount and glen !
  And night shall ever haste away
From feet still guided by thy love !

MY SEVEN LEAGUE BUITS:

Epitome of a Lecture entitled, "From the Clyde to the Eau Noire—the Black Dee of Switzerland."

As I lay sleepin' by the Clyde,
  A mile or sae frae brave Dumbarton,
Whaur day and nicht gangs by the tide,
  And yon gray rock still wears the tartan,

A sprite, it stood afore my face,
  It glowered and nudged me on the shouther,
As quick as lichtnin' in the chase,
  Or flash o' brimstane-waukened pouther.

"Draw on! draw on your seven league buits,
And step owre land and shuggly water,
And see wi' me thae foreign bits
Whaur lips outlandish smack and clatter!"

My seven league buits I drew them on,
And spanked out owre the kintra wide,
A Hieland bonnet on my crown,
My ghaist companion by my side.

We stepped across the German Sea,
By muckle ship and fisher's cobble,
Whaur ilka thing as weel as we
Was fashed wi' mony a kittle hobble.

At Rotterdam we louped on shore,
The water jergan 'tween our taes,
And weel I wat 'twould be a splore
To say we hadna wat our claes.

We ran out through the laigh countrie,
By Gouda, whaur they mak gude cheese,
And Delft, that fashions cups for tea,
Utrecht, that's famed for kirk decrees.

We galloped into German land,
Boun' for the Rhine wi' micht and main,
Sae fast, the cluds they seemed to stand
And glower to see us scud the plain!

We keekit in by auld Cologne,
And saw a kirk nane micht outshine,
Whaur glory mang the pillars shone
Like sunrise through a wud o' pine!

We sped alang the banks o' Rhine,
And saw the seven hills o' story,
We gathered clusters o' the vine
That grew on braes 'neath castles hoary.

The German sangs ruse loud and sweet
Abune fair Bingen's buskit bosom,
That micht hae soothed thae folk that greet
Owre fate uncannie and unlo'esome!

We gat a glimpse o' Strasburg spire,
That lifts its heid far owre the plain,
Whaur gleams the dawn and sunset fire,
And drives the sleet and winter rain.

We cantered up the Rhine wi' glee,
By Basel unto Zurich toun,
There cuiled our feet in Zurich See,
And saw the Alps the cluds abune.

We step the wave to Horgen quay,
And rove 'mang hills and woods and streams,
And soom the gowden Zuger See
Like pilgrims in a land o' dreams!

The Righi braes we speeled, and saw
The heichts and howes o' Switzerland,
And lochs as deep, as grand and braw
As e'er took shape 'neath magic wand!

We spied the haunts o' William Tell,
The Switzer's Bruce and Bannockburn,
St. Gotthard Pass, Realp, Grimsel,
The Lake o' Thun, the braes o' Berne.

Lausanne, whaur Gibbon penned his beuk,
The rise and fa' o' Roman po'er,
That Goths and Vandals tore and sheuk,
And whammelt owre wi roarin' stour !

The lake o' Leman, famed in sang,
Braw buskit roun' wi' toun and tree,
Wi' shepherd's cot and castle strang,
A sicht to cheer a deein' e'e,

The Rhone, was born in winter's ha,'
'Tween Gelmerhorn and Galenstock,
Whaur giants groan in ice and snaw,
Hard pressed 'tween mountain ribs o' rock,

Adown the dell meanders on
To taigle in lake Leman's bosom,
As past the castle o' Chillon
Its waters spread in sunshine lo'esome !

Alang the banks o' Rhone we steer,
Then up Vernayaz face the brae,
Up by Salvan and Finhaut bear
To Chatelard in gloamin' gray.

The Eau Noire, the Swiss Black Dee,
Here kirns and tears 'mang rocks and wuds,
Black, black its face, a sicht to see !
And frae its lips the roar o' fluds !

As in the nicht the red tod's yowl
Rings eerie owre the moss and fell,
Sae this Black Dee wi' gruesome howl
Gangs ragin' through the gates o' hell !

O, here! O, here I canna bide!
My neebour ghaist, gang hame wi' me!
My seven league buits, gie me your stride!
I'm hame at last in my ain countrie!

BLOW, BLOW, YE WINTER WINDS!

Tune—"Nachtlied," 362 in Hymnary.

Blow, blow, ye winter winds! your angry blast,
Through lonely glen, and over mount and moor,
O'er stream and loch, and over ocean vast,
Where waves break silver on the tawny shore;
Your reign is brief, and storms die on the wing,
Or change to warbling breezes of the spring.

Through creaking woods with rasping wrath ye wail,
As 'neath your breath the pine trees rend and roar,
Like mast of ship that stoops with driven sail,
And dips the rising wave with fury hoar,
But He who walks upon the crested wave
Says—"Peace, be still!" and straight ye cease to rave.

Then haste away! ye clouds akin to night!
Ye storms begot by chaos rude and wild!
Fair Spring draws near, arrayed in morning light,
And warbles song upon the breezes mild;
For soon the pilgrim ship will cross the bar,
And leave the deep behind and endless war!

Oh, happy pilgrims in the ark of God!
Who boast a pilot faithful, wise, and true;
Though blind the waves, they bear you on the road
To handsel paradise, a world new!
From Ararat behold the olive wood,
And flocks of doves that have survived the flood!

IN MEMORY OF REVD. JAMES E. FYFE,

United Presbyterian Minister of Kilmacolm,
Who Died 3rd October, 1898.

And art thou gone, my brother, gone from earth?
No herald to prepare the heart for sorrow;
But sudden news of death to dash our mirth!
From what has been, ah! who can know to-morrow?

And yet my time of life should such foretell,
When fall the pines before the stormy brood
Of equinoctial gales, that cedars fell,
And of her autumn glory strip the wood.

Long years ago, upon the banks of Clyde,
Be-south Dumbarton and the Leven vale,
We kept our flocks upon the steep hill-side,
And where the Gryfe flows through the high, green dale.

Full oft we met and mused upon the height
'Tween Gryfe and Clyde, where soars the lark and sings,
Above the fiery train in snorting flight,
And ships like doves with outspread silver wings.

Against the light, into the south we gaze,
Where long, brown moors and Ballageich appear,
This side Drumclog, envailed with sunlit haze,
Where plovers cry, and snipes and whaups career.

Beyond the Gryfe, above Lochwinnoch wave,
Sits Mistylaw, a shepherd king in gray;
In plaid of mist oft wrapt when tempests rave,
With open face he views the summer day.

Across the heights that stretch to West Kilbride,
And Portincross, where Scottish kings of old
Were borne upon Atlantic's heaving tide,
To sleep in lone Iona's dust of gold,

The hills of Arran rise in proud array,
Upon their peaks the light of morn and even,
In sparkling splendour, show the crest of day,
A silent wave upon the beach of heaven!

Across the firth the mountains of Argyle,
Whose feet stand deep where ocean tides have sway,
Through clouds lift up their heads, and catch the smile
Of yon high sun that chases night away!

Beyond the Leven vale Ben Lomond looms,
Far north Ben More's blue peaks, Stobinain's * crest
Above Balquhidder's braes, where heather blooms,
And falcons poise o'er Rob Roy's final rest.

* Pronounce Stobinyan's.

Such were the scenes entranced the kindling eye,
In summer light or driving tempest loud,
When shepherds conversed with the earth and sky,
And saw with joy the rainbow in the cloud.

For thirty years I knew his friendship rare,
A brother wise and true, upright in soul,
Of manly courage, courteous and fair,
His arrows winged by love attained the goal.

Sweet fellowship we had, that never knew
The distant look or angry word, I trow;
No forkèd lightning that the cloud might brew
Ere flashed beneath a troubled, gloomy brow.

'Twas sacred fire that on his altar burned,
And constant as the stream that onward flows;
While seasons rolled and tides for ever turned,
Like incense sweet his aspiration rose.

With faithful zeal he watched and fed his flock,
And wisely led to pasture and to rest;
A shepherd staunch, and stable as the rock
That grows sweet grass and flowers upon its breast.

Twice seven years together on the hill,
We roamed o'er brake and scaur, our flocks in view;
And oft I marked his range of mind and skill,
And reading wide beyond what many knew.

In after years wide space between us lay,
While he abode by Gryfe in Kilmacolm,
My flock spread far 'mong hills of Galloway,
Where lonely waters through the desert roam.

Once and again we met above the Clyde,
And by the silver Ken past joys re-told,
As when a diver rescues from the tide
Of driving time true friendship's cup of gold.

A cup of gold indeed! with nectar clear
New drawn from upper springs, hope's gladsome draught
In memory's chalice fair, imparting cheer
As favouring breeze the ship doth homeward waft.

It seems but yesterday I saw his face,
And all unwitting took a last farewell;
The wistful look, the pensive, earnest gaze
I caught, and turned away from Gryfe's green dell.

'Twas in the month of June when days were long,
I came to share with him the feast of love,
Within the House of God, where speech and song
And act and symbol spoke of things above.

Then from his lips with sacred unction came
Bright gems of truth that hinted priceless worth,
As he discoursed upon that precious name
Like incense sweet and ointment poured forth.

The while he broke the bread and gave the cup,
Ah! little did his people think, I wis,
That was his last, and he so soon should sup
In yonder upper room of heavenly bliss!

The Sabbath past, we voyaged down the Clyde,
That classic stream renowed in Scottish lore,
By Rothesay Bay, the Kyles, and Cowal's side,
To waters blue that fringe proud Arran's shore.

Across the door of Sannox Glen sublime,
Begirt with virgin peaks of pathless rock,
And past the corrie with its dusky rim,
Whose heart of green attracts the roving flock,

We skirted round and stood in Brodick Bay,
The herd of deer above us on the steep,
Where shadows of the wood and sunshine play
With rustling winds that over Goatfell sweep.

Anon we sail between the Holy Isle
And Bruce's cross upon the heather brown,
Whence he beheld the bonfire's gladsome smile
That dared oppression's night and drew the dawn;

Until the ship steered round in Whiting Bay,
Whose shore is busked with haunts of men, and bowers,
Which tempt the sons of Ayr to seize the day,
That gilds with glory Arran's rocky towers.

His wife and daughter, eldest pledge of love,
Were with us on the deck as brighter grew
The sea beneath, the marled sky above,
And glory shone on Arran's mountains blue.

The homeward ship sped up the Clyde again,
And 'tween the Cumbraes and Kilchattan Bay
She carved the foam upon her flowing train,
All crimsoned with the glow of westering day.

We stepped on shore, returned to Gryfe's green dell,
And left the after-glow of day to die,
Be-west the Arran hills and tidal swell
Of Machrihanish Bay, where blind waves cry.

Another sun arose, full-orbed and clear,
And from the azure shone on dewy earth,
Arrayed in June's fair garb, without a peer,
A bridal dress for beauty and for mirth.

Some hours ere noon we traversed Kilmacolm,
Among his folk, and saw the sick and hale,
At work in sun, or learning in the home
Submission meek, when health and pleasure fail.

When first I came to Kilmacolm, the place
A hamlet was, obscure, sequestered, old,
Upon whose roofs of straw the eye might trace
Fair Nature's veil of mossy green and gold.

The village nestled by the ridge that lay
Between it and the east wind's biting breath,
Like stranded ship beyond the tidal play
Of ocean's waves upon the beach beneath.

Now who the new would seek, in Kilmacolm
May find the wealth and style of modern life,
The stately villa and palatial home,
On craggy heights and by the banks of Gryfe.

Within that ancient haunt my brother made
A house for God, from found to roof all new,
Whose living stones with toil and skill were laid:
With plumb-line straight a goodly temple grew.

Such was the scene that glorious day in June,
When last I saw my brother in the flesh;
His health and vigour scarce declined from noon,
A cedar full of sap whose boughs were fresh.

But when with autumn tints the forest bloomed,
The russet brown, the crimson, and the gold,
As if an after-glow the boughs illumed,
From suns gone down, a radiance untold,

The blast of death, was cradled on the Line,
And nursed to madness on the tropic sea,
With roaring fury struck and broke the pine;
Oh! blind the axe which fell upon that tree!

Be still, my soul! the wood may not forecast
The ships are built of trees that fall to earth,
Nor voyages they make to regions vast,
New lands where pilgrims find a heavenly hearth.

But when with sudden wrench the tree is thrown,
And falls to earth, a bower of fruit and leaf,
The rending roots must bleed, the branches groan,
And birds that nestled there fly hence in grief.

The partner of his life, who, years before,
With beauty's wreath adorned her wedding eve,
And decked the manse with love's own priceless dower,
A widow sore at heart now lives to grieve!

When through the vale of trouble walked my friend,
Then step for step with him she shared the scaith;
And some had thought she first through gloom should wend,
And reach the other side of time and death.

But she who knew for long that dreary dell,
And travelled up and down with weary pain,
As Israel in the wilderness could tell,
Was carried from the brink to march again.

While through the glen the strong man held apace,
And swam or waded where the dark stream drave;
With one heat ended trouble's fevered race,
All sorrow lost for aye in Jordan's wave!

Oh, happy grief, that mourns not in despair!
When not from bliss departed friends are riven,
But rise to realms where day is ever fair;
For tears must dry from eyes that look to heaven!

And as Elisha saw Elijah rise
In chariot of fire beyond the clouds,
And deprecated search beneath the skies,
But with his master's mantle cleaved the floods;

So may his wife and son and daughters find
As balm and treasure trove his memory blest,
And with like faith o'ercome and leave behind
Both fell and flood, and gain high heaven's rest!

Farewell, my friend! immortal is thy name,
Not carved in marble nor engraved in brass,
But writ in loving hearts, a quenchless flame
Of stars that shine when clouds and ages pass!

THE ABBEY CRAIG.

Hail, Wallace wight! thou mighty chief!
For whom this tower surmounts the rock,
Thou gavest Scotland's soul relief
From haughty Edward's cruel yoke.

Fit musing spot, proud freedom's tower
Surveys her own beloved land,
Enriched with all the priceless dower
By heroes won with sword in hand!

These mountains were not made to guard
The hut of one ignoble slave,
But to inspire each native bard
To sing the actions of the brave!

That river wandering to and fro
In silver links throughout the plain,
Would fain abide, while winding slow,
It turns and lengthens out its chain!

It fain would course the hallowed grounds
Where patriots have fought and won,
And still would stay within their bounds,
Round ashes of the brave to run!

GRANTOWN CEMETERY.

If e'er the grave could give
A rest that's deep and true,
From cares of those who live
And sigh 'neath heaven's blue;

And if they ever hear
What passes by their home,
Or have a vision clear
Of earth 'neath heaven's dome;

Then blessed are the dead
Who lie beside the Spey,
And hear within their bed
Its murmur night and day.

With transport they behold,
When autumn rules the scene,
Her crimson, brown, and gold,
And fir woods tall and green.

The purple mountains great,
Where cairngorms flash their light,
And high at heaven's gate
The soaring eagle's flight.

Withdrawn from toil and strife,
The tribe of Grants at rest,
Enjoy the dream of life,
By want nor care opprest.

Oh, foolish man ! look round !
Nor trust to dead men's eyes ;
Who will not see above the ground
Finds darkness when he dies !

Who will not hear the angels' song
When he has life and breath,
Is far from music in the throng
That crowd the house of death !

And yet a scene so fair
Enchants the eye and heart,
Men fain would slumber there
When they from life depart.

As Adam woke from sleep
And found his Eve in Eden,
That bower in forest deep
Adorned his new-found maiden;

So saints who sleep by Spey
A slumber God has given,
When they awake, that day,
May find on earth a heaven!

BALMORAL.

Where Dee's clear wave in silver breaks,
As o'er the pebbles it doth run,
And with the dawn the moor-cock wakes,
His neck a-glowing with the sun,

Balmoral stands 'mid fir woods green,
Encircled round by mountains high,
That guard the mansion of our queen,
'Neath plumes of clouds that haunt the sky.

With wisdom she has ruled, and long
Has held the reins with steady hand;
In years to come, above the throng,
Her name will echo through the land.

A woman's heart, a mother's love,
By right her claim, she knoweth well
A gladness soars the hills above,
A grief frequents the lowest dell.

Among the queens have reigned on earth,
For worth and grace her rank is high,
Whose fame depends not on her birth,
But life and deeds that cannot die.

While Dee flows past dark Loch-na-gar,
In silver sheen or red, high flood;
While morning fires the braes of Mar,
And autumn paints Balmoral wood;

While sparkle on Braeriach's breast
The Wells of Dee 'neath summer's ray,
While granite forms Muichdhui's crest
And shadows on Lochavon stay;

Victoria's name will haunt the stream,
The mountain and the purple fell,
And heath-clad cots, like some fair dream
That he who wakes is fain to tell!

Long may she reign, and lustre shed
On human state both high and low!
And when her sun hath westward sped
'Twill leave behind fame's alpine glow!

THE SKY.

O! deep, blue sky! thy glorious brow
Is writ with God's own name,
'Neath thee time's ages ever flow,
But thou art still the same!

Pure art thou in the winter morn,
When snow is on the lea,
And from thy face the light unshorn
Streams over land and sea.

The mountains that to thee aspire,
In azure clad or snow,
Upon their peaks burn holy fire,
While shadows brood below.

O'er thee the sun and moon come forth,
The stars, and ghostly day
Of quivering radiance from the north,
Along the Milky Way.

The treasures of all worlds in thee,
All works that God hath wrought,
Who mirrors in thy changeless sea
The image of his thought!

THE REEL OF TULLOCH.

Upon the banks of silver Dee,
Was played the reel of Tulloch,
As fair a spot as one might see
To dance a Highland walloch!

The tasselled birch and fir tree green,
The woods that busk the river,
The mountains brown that guard the scene
And watch the Dee for ever.

There played the pipes, and the merry song
Above the undertone rose high,
Rolled deep and loud the hills among,
The drone that muffled echo's cry.

The maidens gay, and the young men brave,
They danced aneath the sun and moon,
While step they kept with the lapping wave
To hold a joy that would perish soon.

The dancers' feet and the piper's play,
The shouts of joy and the Highland fling,
The merry reel and the weird Strathspey,
That make the hills with transport ring.

And fire the breast with a rapture rare,
That mocks the pampered palace mirth,
Awakens hope in dumb despair,
And girds him as fair spring the earth;

Oh! where are they, and that summer day
With her busked breast of song and glee?
Far, far beyond the mountains gray,
The golden woods and the rolling sea!

By Tulloch kirk, a ruin now,
A group of mourners silent shed
The tears of grief that mortals know
Who to the dust commit their dead!

And this winds up the joy of earth,
The dance and song of Muses Nine,
And lulls to rest man's wearied mirth
In that deep sleep of auld lang syne!

THE GRAY FLOCK, NEAR MUNGIE, EAGLESHAM.

A FLOCK of sheep in stone, and gray of fleece,
Abide upon the heath in perfect peace.
They lift their heads alike to rain and sun,
Where live sheep feed, and hares and lambkins run.
'Mid these I sat above my place of birth,
Where naught is sad, and naught partakes of mirth,
But happiness abides in pensive mood,
As in the lake doth rest the crystal flood!
A July day it was, when breezes blew
O'er changeless moors where Time no shadow threw,
Or lost his shade within the deeper gloom
Of ebon moss, as on the heather bloom
He laid him down to rest in moorland dim,
To taste oblivion or to snatch a dream;
While round the sky the snipe with whimmying wing,
And lark and curlew made the welkin ring.
O'er Carrot house I saw the rising smoke,
And heard the stream that o'er the linn face broke,
Where, when a child, I saw the timid lamb
By shepherd's crook caught up from deadly harm,
When rushing wildly o'er the giddy steep
In fear of ill behind, it faced the deep
Of waters dark the rocky brow beneath!
As if in fear of life it courted death,
Yet was it saved against its witless will,
To graze and gambol on the heather hill!
The scene was just the same as years ago,
When as a child I heard the waters flow,

Or waded through the wave to trace in haste
A father's steps into the moorland waste!
E'en then his steps beguiled the seeking eye,
All traceless they, as clouds that leave the sky!
And now that trains of years have come and gone,
How vain the search of age to find the dawn!

LIFE.

Tune—"Innsbruck."

Oh, what on earth is sweeter?
Or what to thought is fleeter
Than life's fair summer dawn?
When childhood treads the gowan,
Cheeks rosy as the rowan,
And playful as the fawn!

But what is life to mortals,
Who hurry to the portals
Of death, the gruesome gate?
Spring blossom unavailing,
That calls forth tears and wailing,
When nipped by frost and fate!

Yet were man's life but blameless,
Fell sorrow would be claimless,
Unable to perplex;
His soul would lack not gladness,
Nor ever turn to madness
With thoughts that gnaw and vex!

For innocence hath Eden,
And ne'er is sorrow-laden
As those who go astray;
Who wander till the gloaming
Of death, and see the looming
Of judgment on the way!

We sons of men have sorrow,
Our sins they fear to-morrow,
That slays our present joy;
And were we left of heaven,
By pride and folly driven,
We would ourselves destroy!

We bless the name of Jesus,
Who doth from sin release us,
By death upon the tree;
And in His love excelling,
That passeth human telling,
We trust eternally!

Thou pledge of heaven's favour,
Of men the only Saviour,
We would thy glory see!
Endue with faith and fervour,
With love and high endeavour,
Our hearts that look to thee!

And though our flesh but grass is,
'Neath time that ever passes,
We yet shall live for aye!
By Christ from sin delivered,
And death in pieces shivered,
On the resurrection day!

ON DR. FORDE'S LEAVING THE GLENKENS FOR SOUTH AFRICA TO JOIN THE BRITISH ARMY.

The man of worth we seldom prize
  While he is present with us day by day,
His deeds and virtues rare assume disguise,
  And sterling gold appears like common clay.
When he is gone the blind receive their sight,
And mourn departing day in coming night!

With true regret, farewell we bid our friend,
  The wise physician who our ailments knew,
Whose skill availed where skill could heal or mend,
  While from his lips fell humour native, true,
Refreshed the weary like a cordial balm,
Or breeze that saves the ship from deadly calm!

Esteemed, beloved, among both high and low,
  Where Garpol runs and on the banks of Ken,
In shepherds' cots where Deugh's waves winding flow,
  Through mountain shade adown a moorland glen;
In grateful hearts his name is written clear,
The skill that heals, the hand that wipes the tear!

Why goes he forth to leave this sweet retreat,
  This vale Elysian with its crystal stream,
To plough the heaving deep where billows beat,
  And join the hosts of war where vultures scream?
Save pride of venture which the brave heart knows,
And love would heal the soldiers' wounds and woes!

Then may he safely round the stormy Cape,
Called Hope by lips audacious, speaking fair;
The sword and plague, all perils clean escape,
And home return to breathe the mountain air!
Whose untaught lay with music fills the glen,
The thunder of the linn when swells the Ken!

AN ODE TO LOVE.

Oh Love! how fair thou art no pen can tell!
Thy potent sway the poet knows too well
Who else had never sung!
Thy pennon waves upon the field of Mars,
Thy name is written high above the stars,
And charms the angel's tongue!

As swallow's wings that cleave the realm of air
And stormy seas, and mountains boldly dare,
So swift thy silent feet!
That bridge the gulf between the east and west,
And carry messages to souls distrest,
As honey passing sweet!

Thy limbs of marble white, with pink, warm glow,
The blush of morning on the Alpine snow,
Entrance the gazer's eye!
As forth in royal majesty they move;
The life of friends, the death of foes they prove
Who would their beauties spy!

Thy waist, Oh Love! it is the field of Mars,
The cause of troubles and eternal wars
Wherever thou dost roam!
And yet thy zone is like the Milky Way,
A glory far surpassing common day,
The womb of time to come!

Thy bosom is a summer marriage bower,
Where longing hearts submit, thy smile their dower,
Whose sweetness charms the proud!
All nations thou dost draw within thy sphere,
As o'er strange seas their venturous skiffs they steer,
Waves high and tempests loud!

Thine arm with might the thunderbolt doth speed,
Against its force thy foes find no remede,
But bow to ruin fell!
Oh, luckless is the wight that meets thy frown!
Though he a Titan be, yet must he down
To hide his shame in hell!

But for thy friend its kind and soft embrace
All fear and sorrow from the heart doth chase,
And beckons it to rest!
Full safe, as in a high and shielding rock
That doth the storm defy and terror mock,
Thy friend with thee is blest!

Than Atlas broader are thy shoulders, Love!
They bear the heavens lightly as a dove
Is borne upon the breeze!
And heavier far, the sins and woes of earth,
With all the care of being that hath birth,
Are dandled on thy knees!

Thy neck is like the snowy steep at dawn,
That lifts on high the Jungfrau's peerless crown
Of unimagined grace!
Whose virgin loveliness and glorious bloom
Alike the sun and starry night illume
While gazing on her face!

Thy dimpled chin a ripple on the sea!
A sea of glass where rose light streameth free
O'er boundless depths, though clear!
Oh, Love! who can thy measure ever tell?
The wiles of beauty and its passions fell
Might make archangels fear!

As shaft of light streams through a lofty cloud
Of white and saffron hue, a turret proud
That sails athwart the blue,
Thy nose divine adorns a beauteous face
With royal air and all o'ercoming grace,
Makes sure obeisance due!

Thy cheeks of heather tint, oh! fragrance rare
Of honeysuckle, wild thyme in the air,
That sucks their tempting bloom!
Oh, happy he who strays among such flowers!
Who spends with Love the long, long summer hours
Where waves the yellow broom!

Thy brow is like Mont Blanc's high, ample dome,
Where morn and eve with mingled glory roam,
And pierce the heart of night!
Even so the high and potent mind of Love
Lifts up its beacon fire o'er orbs that move,
Truth's changeless, polar light!

Thine eye, oh, Love! is like the eye of morn,
Begirt with clouds that Iris doth adorn
With hues that witch the sight!
Thine eye, oh, Love! would draw the lost from hell
Had they but vision clear to own the spell
Of Heaven's regal might!

Thy hair is like a cloud, or tangled wood
In golden autumn, when a glowing flood
Of sunset fires the pines!
Where rowan red and plane tree's kindled brown,
And maple raiment weave a glorious crown
Where living amber shines!

Thy lips, oh, Love! who may their virtue tell?
The cherry ripe, the July heather bell,
Or maiden's plighted faith,
Who from the moors in bloom where she did roam,
Her lips with blae-berry dye as she comes home,
As wild thyme sweet her breath!

Oh, Love! how sweet thy voice that bids me come!
Its faintest whisper makes the thunder dumb,
The tempest fall to rest!
Thy image fair within the glassy deep
Is heaven's beauty where the waters sleep,
All treasure in their breast!

MY HEART, MY HEART.

My heart, my heart!
  Now whither art thou going?
Going on, going on,
  As river ever flowing,
In lonesome glen so narrow,
Where rocks the waters harrow:
    In plains so wide
    It links to hide,
And cheat the waiting ocean.

My heart, my heart!
  Now whither dost thou travel?
Travel on, travel on,
  O'er shingle gray and gravel,
Like tide that ebbs and flows,
Or cloud that rains and snows,
    Then fades away
    Beneath the ray
Of sun and star in heaven!

My heart, my heart!
  If onward thou art going,
Where Christ doth show the way,
  And in His grace art growing,
Upheld by Him whose breath
Gives life that scorneth death,
    Let ages fleet!
    Thy constant beat
Will throb with joy for ever!

ON THE MARRIAGE OF JAMES HYND AND ELIZABETH M. HAMILTON,

At Bryanton, Forfarshire, 6th June, 1900.

Upon the lawn the bride and bridegroom stood,
A sight was fair to see!
As woodland wild in days of Robin Hood,
Life young and fancy free!

It was a day in June, the month of flowers,
The fields in green array,
When minstrel birds within their leafy bowers
Sang love's immortal lay!

O lovely was the bride as any rose
In hedge or garden fair,
Or stem of lily bloom that spotless grows,
And scents the summer air!

Or wood in May in hyacinthine bloom,
That busks the royal oak
With purple show, and shedding rare perfume
As wild thyme on the rock!

In manhood's prime, the bridegroom by her side,
Stood there with open face,
As stalwart oak, of trees the crown and pride,
Adorned with summer grace!

With strength and love to guard his moss-rose pure,
A jewel on his breast
Outshines the diamond queen, the Koh-i-nûr
Of empire east and west!

May life in bliss and love be theirs for long,
And make a voyage good,
'Mong isles of beauty rare, of spice, and song,
To port beyond the flood!

And where at last they cast their anchor chain,
Fair Havens let it be!
God's kingdom new, where naught is false or vain,
But all felicity!

SCOTLAND, AWAKE!

Scotland, awake! and claim thy right,
Let none defraud thee of thy name;
Of royal Bruce and Wallace wight
Wreathe round thy head their deeds of fame!

The trophies that thy sons have won
In fields of glory world wide,
Mean thieves have stolen, one by one,
To deck the brow of England's pride.

The honours of thy regal state,
By bribery and guile, alas!
Are smelted into England's fate,
The sterling gold engrossed in brass!

Assert her blood-bought rights! ye sons
Of noble sires, the brave and true,
That while the Tweed to ocean runs
Their worth and fame may live in you!

JEPHTHAH'S VOW.

Oh great, impetuous, undivided soul!
One purpose in thy heart, one crowning goal,
The wreath of victory!
Thy strength a river in a downward strait,
Swift, swift thy march, right through the narrow gate,
With triumph's majesty!

But who has drunk success, the sorcerer's cup,
Surpassing hope, and sat at eve to sup,
Nor taste a bitter herb?
The sweetness in the bowl doth quickly turn
To caustic liquid, that doth fiercely burn,
Beneath the bait the barb!

Oh didst thou think she first of all would come,
With sweetest strains would sing her father home,
Seal triumph with her kiss?
Oh sacrifice unselfish unto dread!
But when the moment came, ah! how he bled
As grief transpierced his bliss!

Or, summing up the treasure he would yield
If God would take his part, and be his shield
And sword the foe to slay,
Did he forget his daughter, chiefest joy,
Neglect the gold, and think of the alloy
As fullest price to pay?

Misluck of man! the lapses of whose mind
Shut fast his gem as in a secret mine,
Deep hid its radiant glow;
By memory forgot, no longer his,
His heart the grave of unremembered bliss,
His tongue his greatest foe!

The eyes of Argos, man may never boast.
Who sees not all around, nor counts the cost,
Must launch on seas unknown;
But he who bravely ventures all for heaven,
Keeps nothing back of all that God has given,
Finds Paradise his own!

IN MEMORY OF ANDREW CARSON, NEWFIELD, GLENKENS,

WHO DIED ON MONDAY, 19TH FEBRUARY, 1901.

A DAY of sun within the land of graves,
When Ken in haste ran red from bank to brae,
From hills of snow brought down a spoil of waves,
We laid a young man in his bed of clay.
Ah! little did we think his end so near,
And this spring breeze should vainly touch his bier!

The snowdrops own the magic of Spring's breath,
As through the frost they press to hail the day;
They live anew that lately slept in death,
And deck the plain in beauty's raiment gay;
But far away the breeze can touch the tomb,
And bid the dead awake in life's young bloom!

Rich spoil is thine, oh, Death ! this day of spring,
A good man and a true in summer prime,
Rare sheaf of first-fruits this, oh, gloomy king !
From thy wide harvest field of every clime ;
The hawthorn bloom of June's long, joyous day,
A branch of perfume sweet laid low in clay !

Though great thou art, a greater do I wrong
Ascribing unto thee unbounded sway ;
For heaven is high and stronger than the strong,
Who claims surrender of thy stores of prey ;
The treasured gold of worth and love with thee
Yield up thou must from depths of earth and sea !

As yonder hills of snow, that guard the vale,
Will doff their winter robe, and wear again
The purple heath, will summer's radiance hail,
Procession fair ! of days a glorious train !
The thaw will melt death's deep, cold wreaths of snow,
And make its conquered treasures swell life's flow !

But now the tears of grief bedew the sod,
That wraps the grave of unobtrusive worth,
A pious man, in whom the love of God
Shed fragrance sweet upon his way on earth ;
His life a radiance for his fellow-men,
As some mild moon reflects the sun on Ken.

The moon, when at the full, has been withdrawn,
To shine no more upon the valley green,
Where silver Ken meanders on and on,
And fain would linger by a lovely scene :
As ran the stream of old in Eden's bower,
That doubled back till one grew into four.

Yet Ken must journey on, although he wind
And meet at last the billows of the deep,
The woods and hills and king's dale left behind,
And in the ocean o'er his Eden weep;
Thus men depart and mourn a vanished past,
Their summer left behind, they strive with winter's blast!

So now, bereft, alone, the father mourns
A son beloved, for years a strength and stay,
As 'mong his flocks and herds he daily turns,
Marks how they thrive as through the holm they stray;
E'en fortune good, I trow, too late may seem
For him who wakes and weeps a broken dream!

Be still, my soul! nor dare thou to complain!
That man is blest who gives to God the best.
Who bows to heaven amid the sleet and rain,
Will home attain at last, and be God's guest
At that high feast where Reason finds her quest,
And all things known do minister to rest.

Let kindred weep a loss their own, not his,
Such tears are shed for good men when they die.
And walk with Christ, at last to share the bliss
Of him now mourned, who dwells with God on high!
Then they at length, when night and sorrow pass,
Will strike their harps upon the sea of glass!

IN MEMORY OF JESSIE GOURLAY,

WHO DIED ON FRIDAY, 23RD FEBRUARY, 1900.

FAIR maid! and thou art gone, untimeous flight!
When earth is decked with snowdrops pure and white.
Thyself a bird of spring!
When song began upon the budding spray,
Sweet lilts that whispered of a coming lay,
Thy song with thee took wing!

Oh, hadst thou waited till the grove was green
And trilled thy warblings wild, a summer queen
Of love and joy ripe grown!
Regaled, entranced with many a pleasant strain,
And winning looks that captive took the swain,
The eye and ear had known!

At break of day we sought, and she was gone,
As crimson grew the cheek of youthful dawn,
While sang the soaring lark.
Right through the cloud to heaven's azure dome,
On wings unseen she rose to yon bright home,
To sing where angels hark!

Oh, earth is fair, when spring doth busk the year,
And at his chamber door doth youth appear,
Feet-shod with sandals fleet;
To step upon the green a hunter gay,
And course the world 'neath the sun of May,
To find and taste all sweet.

But home he comes at last with weary foot,
As one who dared Niagara to shoot,
And braved its rushing din;
Right o'er the rocks and through the rainbow spray,
As if with terror and with death at play,
He leaps into the linn!

Good fortune his if he survives the wave,
Escapes the surges of a living grave,
A broken man for life!
On foolish feats the strength of Samson spent,
And weakness left to groan and to repent
A course with ruin rife!

Oh, better far to run a brief career,
The joy of innocence and youth's good cheer,
When life and heart are given
To prove the truth of love and grace on earth,
With lips that speak of peace and heartsome mirth,
The richest dower of heaven!

When such return to God in youth's first bloom
The wrench is sore, and cruel seems the tomb
That holds the precious dust;
But when the summons calls them high and higher,
To join the rapture of a heavenly choir,
Grief's arrow well may rust!

Farewell, sweet maid! a nymph of early spring,
No more thy warbles make the echoes ring
As tongues of life and breath!
Afar, afar, beyond the starry sphere,
Thy home with Christ, where love may never fear
Vicissitude or death!

May He who doth the riven rock adorn
With golden moss, whose glory well may scorn
All feats of human art,
The stricken parents' thoughts tumultuous calm,
Sustain their faith with Gilead's holy balm,
And heal the broken heart!

Oh, may the brothers and the sisters dear,
That o'er their Jessie shed the silent tear
Of sorrow strange, unsung!
Behold the Friend divine, and crave the boon
Of virtue rare, revives the souls that swoon
With recent anguish wrung!

TO THE REVD. JOHN ALLAN, BRECHIN.

On the Death of his Two Infant Children.

What may subdue the flame of new-born grief,
Assuage the anguish of a parent's heart,
Who mourns his child, and tender true relief,
Such balm as heals death's wound and bitter smart?

Oh, soft the foot-fall of the mourner's friend,
And more than lips can say the speaking eye
And heart, whose prayers to the throne ascend
For grace to own the will of God on high!

Bereavèd heart! the loss you now deplore
Is great indeed, beyond what others are,
As rising stream that enters at our door
Impresses more than voice of seas afar!

And yet, methinks, death could not visit thee
In guise more placid, aspect less severe
Than he has done, who plucked from thy green lea
Two snow-drops pure bedecked with morning's tear!

When it is well with those we love and mourn,
Who go to God, celestial peace and joy,
We may not pray they should forthwith return,
And change the gold of heaven for earth's alloy!

Nay, let them rest secure in Christ's own arms,
And stray with youth and hope through paradise;
Less than a dream to them earth's fading charms,
While they enjoy a life that time defies!

Of Israel of old did God demand
The firstlings of the flock, first ears of corn;
And he who gave with willing heart and hand
Found no occasion in the end to mourn.

And though thy seed be sown with tears, and hid
Within the bosom of the cold, deaf wave,
Or go to sleep within the coffin lid
The long, long slumber of the silent grave!

'Twill yet awake and come to glorious birth,
A golden harvest in the day of God,
When he who sowed in tears will reap with mirth,
And carry home his sheaves, a happy load!

Our Lord and Saviour knows the human heart,
The mother's love and pride, the father's care,
Oh, may his grace abounding heal your smart,
And on the cloud portray the rainbow fair!

So when the blast is o'er, the sleet and rain,
As earth grows green and blooms the olive wood,
May seasons fair succeed, a happy train,
And years of bliss forget the vanished flood!

ON THE PICTURE OF MR. AND MRS. GEDDES IN BRIDAL ARRAY.

What vision fair is this that I behold,
The bride and bridegroom in the age of gold,
On this, their marriage day!
When strength and loveliness have reached their prime,
And pitched their tent where blooms the sweet, wild thyme,
And mutual love hath sway!

The bridegroom is of manly guise to see,
Both tall and straight as grows a stately tree
In some Canadian grove!
Long may he stand and lift his head on high
In sun and cloud, and commune with the sky,
His heart the nest of love!

Were I to meet the bride some summer day,
In this her wedding robe so blithe and gay,
In strange Ontario;
I then should see her mother young again,
Herself a bride, the May dew on the plain,
The grace of long ago!

Long may she bloom and keep Old Time at bay,
Wear raven locks and shun the stealthy gray,
With joy her youth maintain!
And may a dew of blessing from above
Refresh her soul with true, perennial love,
Though mortal pleasures wane!

And when arrives the final, festal day,
Oh, may our bridal friends in white array
Enhance the Lamb's great joy!
And in the throng of ransomed tribes who sing
Of Moses, David, and of Zion's King,
May they their harps employ!

THE RAINBOW.

Oh, radiant bow! that blossoms in the cloud,
The sway of day within the realm of gloom,
How fair thou art when surly winds blow loud,
As thy proud arch the tempest doth illume,
And promise gives the blast will overpass,
As shining pearls gleam upon the grass!

When thou art seen within the cloud that sails
Upon the west wind of a morning hour,
Quick, from its brooding brow thy glory fails,
As wintry night breaks through thy summer bower;
Like some wild boar lays waste the garden fair,
The bursting storm lays all the forest bare!

Yet not in vain on clouds thy splendour shone,
The arch of day o'er torrents of the night,
A glimpse of heaven's gate to pilgrim lone,
Inspiring hope, imparting matchless might,
To wend his way through darksome glens and drear,
Until he hails the east and day-dawn's cheer.

Oh, bridge of glory such as Jacob saw
When down the purple steep the angels sped,
As over frost the spring wind and the thaw,
To glad the sleeper in his stony bed
With dreams prophetic of the love of God,
From which he wakes to take faith's upward road.

When Noah by the altar stood, and saw
A cloud on Ararat gloomed dark and dread,
His soul was thrilled with sudden fear and awe,
As from its wings the startled sunshine fled,
Foreboding storm, mayhaps the flood again,
Earth sunk once more beneath the roaring main!

While rose the smoke from off the altar fire,
His prayer sped to heaven, was answered there,
As on the cloud, portending tempest dire,
Shone forth thy radiant arch of glory rare;
While God's own voice spoke words of golden cheer,
That nevermore the flood should waste man's year!

Since then, for ages long, good tidings thou
Hast told to sons of men oppressed with fear,
As they have seen thee on the storm-cloud's brow
And hailed thee as the sign of heavenly cheer,
Fair emblem of the grace of Jesus Christ,
The bower where God with man keeps mercy's tryst!

Oh, radiant bow! time cannot blight thy bloom,
Whose arch encircles heaven's lofty dome,
Shine in the cloud! and evermore illume
The eyes that look for God and seek his home!
And in the last, lone vale where lorn clouds lower,
Oh! may thy glowing span light up death's hour!

IN MEMORY OF JOHN MILLIGAN, KIRKLAND, GLENKENS.

WHO DIED ON MONDAY, 5TH MARCH, 1900.

WHAT grave is this upon the silent brae?
That wears a garland rich of lily flowers,
Of radiance brighter than this clear March day,
Sweet captive blooms late snatched from summer bowers!
Oh! love it is hath wrought this glorious wreath,
That decks the bed of him who sleeps beneath!

Oh! many throbbing hearts are sore to-day,
Who basked within the sunshine of his love,
His heart a bosky dell where youth might play,
And age find rest as in a leafy grove!
But all on earth of price and beauty flies,
And gifts of love have wings that seek the skies!

The sanguine heart and brain with projects vast,
That filled the present with to-morrow's dream,
Spell-bound by sudden frost, by death held fast,
A crystal silence for the roaring stream!
What glamoury is this deludes life's tide,
That laps the shore and fain would there abide!

It suns itself upon the golden sand,
  And gambols round the bay bestrewn with shells,
Whose rainbow tints illume the winding strand,
  A wreath of glory where the proud wave swells!
A few brief hours, and then it must return,
Although it foam and white with fury burn!

And this the friend we mourn was like the tide,
  A spring-tide rising high upon the land,
O'ercoming rocks, embracing far and wide
  A rugged realm of toil with brain and hand;
Then sudden fall and ebb far, far away
To silent depths beyond the view of day!

A tide he was, and healing was the wave
  That kissed the bank of flowers upon the shore:
They miss the blessing that his presence gave,
  But wait for his return, ah! nevermore
While Ken flows silver in the sunny day,
Or golden waves the broom on Kirkland brae!

No more we see him on the highway hard,
  Where far and near his curricles ran fast,
By chargers drawn that knew the good reward
  Of corn in measure full when day was past.
His servants, too, they owned the open hand
And kindly heart that breathed in each command!

How many miss his words of sportive cheer,
  Where humour rippled on a ready lip,
That breathed around a genial atmosphere,
  As plays where bees their cups of honey sip
In flowery mead, invites fair summer's stay
To cool her feet where Ken's clear waters play!

But, deck her bed with flowers of fragrance rare,
  Where limpid waters hum among the bowers!
Brief, brief her rest, she wakes and on must fare
  On footsteps fleet with all her maiden hours,
And leaves her fading booth to driving snows,
That wreathe and swirl as the north wind blows!

Our friend is gone who was a summer bright,
  And chill the breezes blow that lack the sun,
Who will return with all his radiant might,
  But not our friend while streams to ocean run!
Nay, we who weep must follow him we mourn,
One long procession to the final bourn!

And if the valley mourns and feels the shade
  Of sudden and perpetual eclipse,
Of full-orbed light swift quenched in death's dark raid,
  In vain all speech or magic of the lips
To tell or soothe the anguish and distress
That pierce the widow's heart and fatherless!

But He who wounds can heal, who takes can give,
  Who rules o'er all in wisdom and in love,
Will bless the heart that to His will doth live,
  Relying still on Him who reigns above,
Who in His grace once paid upon the Cross
A ransom full from death and boundless loss!

Oh, may the God of hope and comfort true
  Assuage their grief and guide them in the way!
Yea, gild their tears with light as dawn the dew,
  Or rain upon the grass where sunbeams play,
And make their loss to-day a gain at last,
High heaven won and death for ever past!

OH, WHERE ARE THE MEN?

Thou land of my fathers, my country so dear!
With thee are delights for the noble and free,
For those who know beauty and virtue revere,
No realm of the earth can compare unto thee!

But still when I gaze on thy steep, rugged hills,
The wide, purple moors 'neath the dome of the sky,
In the lone winding glens that the linn's thunder fills,
Oh, where are my men? is old Scotia's cry.

The shieling, the hamlet, the cottar's abode,
They sleep now in ruins forsaken and lorn,
They lie as gray cairns by the traveller's road,
As graves of the past, nests harried and torn!

The mark of the plough in its deep furrow line,
And the toil of the spade that wrought there of old,
Are seen in the rigs that have slept from langsyne,
Where late in the autumn the bracken waves gold!

Deep, deep in the earth are the arms that toiled there,
And still is the heart that throbbed with life's play,
And faded the lips of the loved and the fair,
That drank of the spring in the hot harvest day!

The voice of my country doth sound in mine ears,
My raiment is fair, but where are my sons?
Oh, cruel the beauty is fed with their tears,
The charm of the forest where the lone water runs!

My mountains, they wear their gray helmets of mist,
And over their peaks the proud eagle flies,
The lark carols high for whoever may list
The rapture of freedom in unfettered skies!

My forests are decked with the heather and snow
That plaided their bosom when Fingal was young,
All radiant with beauty in summer's warm glow,
They miss the free step of my sons brave and strong.

Where clustered the clans in the hamlet and cot,
Where children roamed free, their play field the moor,
Where the kirk and school stood and marked out the spot
Where life grew and loved, and the waters ran pure!

The far-spreading flocks graze the heath-covered hearth,
In the shade of the rowan the deer fondly sips
The wave of the well where in frolicsome mirth
The bairns plucked the berries red, red as their lips!

The deer and the sheep and the trilling curlew,
The sweep of the eagle, the plover's lone call,
The lark and the swallow, the roaming cuckoo,
I love and I cherish, have room for them all!

But what the wild birds, the herds and the flocks,
The dog at my heel when the hirsel I fold,
The hare on the fell, or the goats on the rocks?
When my children I mourn on a hearth that is cold!

IN MEMORY OF VINCENT HALL,

WHO DIED 31ST MAY, 1901.

AND is he gone? the young, the fair, the brave,
With May's last breath, the month of song and flowers!
No more for him the daffodils shall wave,
Nor soar the lark up through his cloudy bowers,
That golden glow before the eastern gate,
As day ascends in silent, solemn state!

Swift, swift they pass, the forms that beauty takes!
As fly the snipes when startled at the springs;
The cuckoo's voice too soon the wood forsakes,
And speeds afar on unseen, azure wings;
So o'er the envious sickle fall the flowers
That graced with bloom glad summer's sunny hours!

Thus passed our friend when dew was on the field,
And hawthorn blossom on the hedges green,
When life was young and all too loath to yield
The flower of hope to sudden hoar-frost keen,
The door burst in by death's tornado wild,
When youth was at the feast by time beguiled!

The while he sat and feasted in the hall,
Where all was gay and glad, and high-strung song
With music's witching touch did souls enthrall
With dreams of life and love and bliss for long!
With careless eye youth saw as gray-beards went
For whom the feast was done, the pleasure spent!

Our friend was young, and wore Apollo's locks,
The golden lustre of a summer morn
Upon a field of dew that proudly mocks
A foe unseen, a sudden wind unborn!
While gray-beards went for whom the time was late
Fair youth might stay and trust deferring fate!

But as the scholar reckons on the time
In which the master calls him up by name,
Bids him translate a passage deep, sublime,
Before his fellows all, for praise or blame;
Yet ere that date is given him a page
Too deep for future lore, youth's fond presage!

So in youth's session mortal man may play,
His task unlearned, unskilled his mind to know
What life should be, and what his soul should sway,
When he is called from festive time to go
And read a page before the Master's eye
At which he staggers as one doomed to die!

Not such our friend! though he was gay and lithe,
Elastic, quick of thought, and deft of hand,
And knew the zest of life, the day-dawn blithe
That tints with roseate hue the waiting land!
His heart aspired to God, and looked afar
Beyond the flower and cloud and paling star!

One day we roamed upon the banks of Dee,
Amid the heath, and heard the curlew's cry
Where mount and moor were glorious to see,
Asleep at noon beneath the open sky,
Whose summer clouds of white and saffron hue
Lay still, or softly sailed the soundless blue!

We sought a loch in dimple of the moor,
  Where from a westward hill a shade was cast,
While on its bosom lay the lily flower
  That gently sipped the wavelets gliding past;
Sweet, sweet the bloom that lay at leisure there,
But swift it sped as foam-bells spun of air!

With wistful eye he saw the wilderness,
  The hasting day that swept a gorgeous trail
Of glowing light, did rock and heath caress
  As on it westward sped o'er mount and vale,
The while with modest lip high truth he sought
With sacred thirst in him divinely wrought!

Now he is gone as that fair summer day,
  As blossom of the grass that shaken flies,
Or sheen of dawn on stream and mount doth play
  A transient hour ere towering clouds arise,
That sheathe morn's smile in deep, portentous gloom,
As ambushed frost devours the apple bloom!

Ingenuous soul! we may not mourn for thee
  Beyond the loss is ours while here on earth!
Thy heart we trust enjoys eternity
  With those who dwell around the heavenly hearth,
Where truth is known to them who see God's face,
A healing vision that doth grief efface!

ANDREW CARNEGIE.

Dunfermline town! thy honours are not few,
But laurels fair upon thy queenly brow,
Whose bloom is watered with celestial dew,
And flourish shall while ages onward flow!
Thou hast the grave of Bruce, the patriot king,
Carnegie's cradle thine, the man I sing!

All hail to him who gives with open hand,
Whose heart has made his wealth fame's golden wreath,
Or well Artesian seeks the thirsty land,
And blessing showers upon his native heath!
Go east and west, search far and wide, and narrow,
Through earth's broad climes, you will not find his marrow!

When life was young he voyaged to the west,
The land of prairie flowers, broad rolling streams,
Pine forests tall, their boughs with darkness drest,
Deep mines of gold, and fond ambition's dreams:
'Twas there his skill in toil as magic wand
To gold and rubies turned both rock and sand!

His fortune made, he saw it grow and grow,
Like stream Pactolus famed in days of old,
Whose glowing waves auriferous did flow,
And line its bed with dust of temptsome gold!
He saw the stream, and all that wealth his own!
A marvel this, his heart became not stone!

For no Medusa's head ere seen by man
Did ever blight, or human souls enthrall,
Or change the form to ghostly shade and wan,
As Mammon's eye, and hand with golden ball!
Before whose feet unnumbered hearts lie low,
All turned to dust that beds the stream of woe!

As all in vain snell winter's frost and snow
High Hecla's heart of fire essay to choke,
Or freeze the springs that warm and gushing flow,
And riven bars of ice disdainful mock;
Carnegie's heart, of more than tropic glow,
Bids geyser streams through dreary deserts go!

Oh, Caledonia! show him honour due!
A Scot indeed, a man with regal heart!
His title to your love is royal, true,
Whose name and Scotia's fortune may not part!
While burns the torch of knowledge in the land,
Or music thrills, see there Carnegie's hand!

Ye sires! from John O' Groat's to Gretna Green,
From Fife's East Neuk unto the Isle of Skye,
The Hebrides, Iona fair their queen,
Lulled fast asleep by ocean's heaving sigh!
Freight ye the winds with blessing on his name
Who to your sons has oped the gates of fame!

"SHE HATH DONE WHAT SHE COULD."

When every one does what he can,
The child may fare as fares the man.
The meek and lowly, loving heart,
That toils in shade nor seeketh praise,
As to the Lord performs his part,
Will find reward, no end of days,
A cup of joy that runneth over,
As bees that pasture on the clover
Have honey, all that they can carry.

A maid there was in days of old,
Whose word was worth far more than gold,
Who for a nurse to tend her brother,
New taken from the ark of rushes,
To Pharaoh's daughter brought his mother,
Who stilled his cries with love's sweet hushes.
Oh, Miriam, the little wren!
What tidings did she carry then
To chase away her mother's sorrow!

When Syrians made a cruel raid,
From Canaan took a Hebrew maid;
A captive she from home afar,
Where flow Abana's stream and Pharpar;
Her tender love, a lone, strange star
In darksome sky, attracts the harper;
She sought to heal her nation's foe,
Who thralled her life and brought her low;
Few, few on earth her love may marrow!

Yet every child whose heart hath love,
May joy create like Noah's dove,
Whose leaf of olive brought good cheer,
The promise of a world new!
The flood away, no more to fear,
Earth decked with flowers and morning dew!
Let Miriam and the Hebrew maid
Lead through the earth fair mercy's raid,
While maidens chant high heaven's triumph!

And when the Egyptian host of pride
And thraldom dour is 'neath the tide;
When Morning waves her jewelled hand,
While tribes redeemed in concert sing,
Night strikes her tent and flees the land,
And cymbals loud praise Israel's King;
Oh, with what rapture Miriam leads,
O'er moor and fell and golden meads,
To Paradise her troop of maidens!

IN MEMORY OF WILLIAM BYERS,

Who Died at Barskeoch, Glenkens, on the 17th June, and was Buried in Kells Churchyard on the 21st June, 1901.

Thou breeze of June hast travelled many a mile
Since dawn of day, now rest a little while
Upon a hero's bier!
Though travelled far, thou hast not seen since morn
A truer, braver heart of woman born
Than deeply slumbers here!

No call for haste, it is the panting hour
Of early afternoon, when seeks the bower
Of hedge or woodland shade
The pilgrim weary of the naked way,
The glare and heat of this the longest day,
On mount and lowly glade.

Then linger soft, and curtain round with sighs
The couch of shade where he in slumber lies
Too deep for morn to wake!
Though she appear in summer's bright array,
And songs a thousand warble on the spray,
He heedeth not daybreak!

Oh, dull the ear that heard the skreigh of day!
The first faint twitter of the warbler's lay
In dell and mountain high,
As with his dog he gathered in the sheep
From craggy height and from the rushy deep,
By light of dawn's gray sky!

His days were long, and they were filled with toil,
But brief his day of life and its turmoil,
His sun went down at noon!
In his full strength, the prime of mind and hand,
He laid his burden down at God's command,
Upon the breast of June!

The fleet of foot and strong, who walked with ease
Long leagues of moor and hill as April breeze
That whistles o'er the bent,
No more shall travel through the wilderness,
His flock to spy, and save in storm and stress
The tender and the spent!

Ye Rhinns of Kells! where grazed his flock of sheep
Upon your crests, and by your channels deep,
Where thunder torrents rushed,
No more his step will startle on Millyea
The broad-winged glede or falcon from his prey,
At noon when all is hushed!

Thou echo! dwelling in thy lofty home,
Thy gallery of rock where thou dost roam
Above Loch Dungeon's gloom,
Lament his death! recall his voice again!
If thou can'st gather up the fallen rain,
Or spoil an early tomb!

His hospitable home the pilgrim knew,
The hills who traversed when the summer dew
Distilled upon the moor;
Or, when declined dark winter's feeble day,
And night with storm beneath her mantle gray
Blew eerie at the door!

The fire burned bright and clear upon the hearth,
While faces smiled that knew the honest mirth
Where love at home had sway.
The board was spread with free and bounteous hand,
Where guests belated found a welcome bland
And shelter till the day!

But oh! so narrow now thy hermitage!
All windowless and dark, with no presage
From this low house of death!
No hour that bids thee wake, thy door unbar,
And step abroad o'er moor and rocky scaur
When purple blooms the heath!

Ye shepherds ! judges of the earth and sky,
The signs of both, with keen, far-seeing eye,
Lament a brother rare !
For skill to shear the fleece, the sheep to feed,
O'er pastures high and low the flock to lead,
With him few might compare !

Upon the hills that rise be-south Dromore,
And nurse the Skyre, that quickly finds the shore,
Where rushing Solway goes,
The last few years of toiling life he led,
And won the praise of him whose flock he fed
In measure that o'erflows.

Not one among a thousand his degree,
But one among ten thousand, such was he
To carry out commands !
The best that man can do success to earn,
Such work was his, exacting service stern
From his own heart and hands !

Transparent soul ! courageous for the right !
He sought the common weal, for that would fight
With reason's weapon keen.
On questions high, pertained to Church and State,
He pondered oft, and would with men debate
At clippings on the green.

And highest truth of all, he saw Christ's face,
The effluence of love doth darkness chase,
And bids the night begone !
'Twas thus he welcomed death as God's own will,
And said to love of kith and kin, Be still,
And wait on Heaven alone !

Though salt the tears of love, faith's test severe,
When death comes in and severs kindred dear,
The Lord appoints relief!
As Israel saw his Joseph next the throne,
Whom he had mourned and wept as dead and gone
For longsome years of grief!

The Husband of the widow lives on high,
The Father of the orphans hears their cry,
Aweary on life's road!
He has withdrawn the strongest earthly stay,
That they may walk by faith, may watch and pray,
And claim their father's God!

Slow goes the bier adown the Garroch glen,
And through the vale soft flows the wave of Ken,
That lingers 'mong the flowers!
But rare the cuckoo's voice, while swallows fly
From cloud to cloud across a dappled sky
Of roaming sun-lit bowers!

And as the swallow's wing faith onward speeds
Across the deserts gray, and golden meads,
To find a fairer shore!
A swallow swift, she speeds from cloud to cloud
O'er seas unknown, where stormy winds blow loud,
For summer on before!

Though slow the pace, ah! soon we reach the grave!
Commit to dust what earth of man must have,
Yet sow this seed in faith!
Assurèd of the day when he shall rise,
And with the ransomed shall ascend the skies,
Triumphant over death!

IN MEMORY OF THOMAS MAXWELL,

WHO DIED AT CROSSMICHAEL, 23RD SEPTEMBER, AND WAS BURIED 26TH SEPTEMBER, 1901, IN KELLS CHURCHYARD.

WHAT sheaf is that, thou harvester of men!
Thou bearest now on this September day?
The ears are full, and ripe the golden grain
That rustles 'neath thine arm, thy autumn prey;
Ah, sure it knew the dew, the wind, and rain,
The sun and shade of pleasure and of pain!

A human harvest thine, and wide the field
That feels the sun and ripens 'neath the moon;
And late or early all to thee must yield,
The April bud, the flower that busketh June,
The rosy apple where the leaf turns brown,
The rowan berries and the thistle-down!

A stalwart man and strong, before the blast
Of death has fallen on the breast of earth.
There let him rest, the days of warfare past,
The dargs of toil, the feasts of song and mirth!
The night of trouble and of hope deferred
Is also gone, with former day interred!

His cradle was the dell of Castlefern,
Where he was waked to play and lulled to sleep
By crystal waves, that run and murmuring yearn
For sister streams beneath Dunreggan steep.
The first new impulse of a soul alive
He felt while straying there by Moniaive.

The boy grew up to manhood's prime and strength,
To toil behind the plough and tend the sheep;
The fleeting winter day and June's bright length
He turned the soil or did the hirsel keep.
A yeoman brave and honest to the core,
Such men were Scotland's boast in days of yore!

Nor toil alone he knew who loved and sang,
And won his love where waved the yellow broom
On Grennan braes, as echo softly rang
A sweet response, while sunset did illume
The Rhinns of Kells and lingering, silver Ken,
An envied hour, the happiest of men!

An hour? nay, year on year he proved love's worth
Beside a faithful wife and offspring true,
His boast the purest joy man knows on earth,
His home a garden blest with heaven's dew;
His lot who is beloved at home, abroad,
Who serves his day and humbly walks with God.

Upon the hills of Deugh, by high Carsphairn,
Where Golden Wells flow forth from Cairnsmore's breast,
He tended sheep, and day by day did earn
By wise and faithful toil, his nightly rest,
Within his cottage home, where Deugh runs past,
And throws his warbled song upon the blast.

'Twas then his children on the hearth did dawn,
As one by one the stars in heaven appear,
Rejoice the traveller as he journeys on,
And through the night beholds the highest sphere,
Lifts up his heart to Him who dwells on high,
And owns the joys of earth are of the sky!

With dawn he rose, and with the lark he sang,
Beheld the blush of morn on Lochinvar
And Criffel gray, while echo's answer rang
To shout and bark from hollow, rock, and scaur.
On Arran's jagged peaks the sunset glow
He saw, on summer's blue and winter's snow.

The master's voice is still, his heart is cold,
Nor ardent beats beneath the noon-day sun
While shearing sheep within the summer fold!
Now winter reigns and streams have ceased to run!
With "Sharp," his dog, no more will echo play,
And with beguiling bark attend his way!

He left the hill where blows the westland wind
When fresh from surges of the heaving deep,
And driving spray the mariner doth blind
Who falls within the hurricane's wild sweep:
He struck his tent, adown the Ken went he,
And found a sweet retreat in Old Glenlee.

In shade of ancient trees and shielding hills
His dwelling stood, low south from Ballingear,
Where voice of hushful streams the valley fills,
And song of birds when Spring is in the year;
A peaceful haunt, sequestered from the dell
Where Ken's waves languish or in tempest swell!

The Meggat hill, Glenlee's fair mount he trod,
Craig Gower he knew, and Black Craig's dusky brow:
Craigshinnie's ragged comb, the moorland broad
That lines the rocky bed where Dee's waves flow,
He oft beheld in all the seasons' light,
The tawny moon-light haze and sunshine bright!

When winds blew hard upon the winter moor,
And swirling drift on Millyea's ample breast.
With sleet and snow that man could scarce endure,
He led his flock adown the vale to rest;
While raged the storm above, below was peace,
Affection's smile at home, the soul's release!

The years of peace fly fast, the feet of joy
Are swift as roebucks on the braes of morn,
What time the hunters on the moor deploy
With hound and spear at sounding of the horn.
Swift, swift the feet are winged with joy or fear,
And soon, too soon, they tread on pleasure's bier!

He flits anon, what nest is nest for aye?
Though closely hid 'mid boughs of summer green;
The brood grows fast, on wings they flee away!
Thus life speeds on, and changes with the scene.
Oh, foolish man! to dream of rest on earth,
The babe's brief sleep awaiting light and birth!

In Balmaclellan's shaws with outlook far,
Upon the borders of the purple moor,
And Parton heights, that neighbour sun and star,
And silence reigns from human stir secure,
He spent life's afternoon, that darkened down
With trouble's cloud, affliction's heavy frown!

Then, as a shepherd driven from the hills,
As ever louder blows the rending gale,
While snowy slush the rising streamlet fills,
Descends with draggled plaid and steps that fail,
Till through the wreaths of snow he reaches home,
To rest him there while storms o'er mountains roam;

From Parton heights and Patie's ancient thorn
He sought in sunny vale a still retreat,
Where cattle graze at ease, and golden corn
Bedecks the fields around Crossmichael's street.
'Twas there he lay and waited for his change,
Where Dee's waves spread and o'er the meadows range.

Though sore and weary was the pilgrim's path,
Through cloud and thunder to the western land,
Like some fair moon that rides the clouds in wrath,
On, on he went, upheld by God's own hand;
And through the riven cloud a light from far
Betrayed a flight beyond the highest star!

Now take thy rest! such rest the river knows
Was born among the hills where stray the flocks,
Where camp the thunder-clouds and winter snows,
That flush its passage through the jagged rocks;
As spreading Dee takes rest in swelling flood,
All stilled the waves, late boisterous and rude!

The residue of waves is left behind,
The spirit of the flood rolls on before,
The body in the grave a mask, a blind,
The soul not there, whose wings to heaven soar!
Yet as the Dee draws in the spreading wave,
The soul will clothe anew and rob the grave!

The day is fair that leads thee to the tomb,
Clear shines the sun from yonder azure high,
As stream and lake and mount he doth illume
With all the lustre of a glowing sky!
Farewell! and take thy rest in Kells' Churchyard,
Thy soul with Him whose love is all reward!

At church, at market, and the polling booth
A noble of the soil! respect he won
From high and low for equity and truth.
His presence kindly as the genial sun,
And lips of humour, graced with guileless mirth
The leisure hours of life around the hearth!

The tender heart, the open hand were thine.
The board was fitly spread, the converse meet,
Thy speech the accent of a tongue divine,
The breath of truth with fragrance passing sweet!
The grace of God, the love of man in thee,
Remembered now, is spices felt at sea!

KILLIECRANKIE.

As I went o'er the moor that lies
Between the Tay and Pitlochrie,
Whence hills are seen that pierce the skies,
Both near and far as one can see,
I came upon the Tummel side,
Where Garry on its wave doth ride,
Late come from Killiecrankie.

I set my face against the stream,
Went north as through a fairy land,
Like mortal in a waking dream,
In scenes the work of magic wand,
While on the breeze the roaring flood
Thrilled through the silence of the wood,
A brawling Killiecrankie!

The oak, the birk, and Scottish pine
Knit strength with grace and majesty,
And all their fairest charms combine
Around the house of Fascally,
With hazel, rowan, ash, and elm,
All glory of the woodland realm,
To doat on Killiecrankie!

Upon the tassels of the birk
The autumn gold begins to glow,
Beside the fir tree, green and mirk,
And rowans with their crimson show,
While here and there the heather bloom
And gray rocks break the glorious gloom
Of wood in Killiecrankie!

As up the pass I joyous sped,
Through scenes of rare and changing grandeur,
New beauties came for those that fled,
Like stream that ever doth meander,
And for the links it leaves behind
New circuits takes to please mankind,
Such fare gives Killiecrankie!

But what is this far down I hear?
Half hid 'neath sylvan canopy,
That nothing knows of such good cheer,
But brawls and foams eternally!
The murmur of an angry stream,
Soul sudden reft of happy dream,
This maketh Killiecrankie!

Has mother Nature pitied thee,
And robed thee with all loveliness,

To hide thy woe with outward glee,
While passing through thy wilderness?
So men hide sorrow from the eye,
And from the sun blink of the sky,
Like thee, dark Killiecrankie!

These walks that wind throughout the wood
The pilgrim woo to hear thy story,
To hearken to thy accents rude,
And snatch from rage a flash of glory!
And when thy tale is told to man,
His own true folly he may scan
Was wrought in Killiecrankie!

A bloody battle there was fought
Upon the rocks and purple heath,
Where heroes had no other thought
Than give or take the stroke of death!
For folly men the claymore drew,
And Scotland's heart did sadly rue
The feat of Killiecrankie!

Would that the brave were always found
Upon the side that right doth claim,
The field of fight were holy ground,
Their steps of blood the road to fame!
But when the victory was won
By bloody Clavers, yon bright sun
Grew dark o'er Killiecrankie!

In praise of Highland heroes brave
Who threw away the shield and gun,
With claymore dread a pathway clave,
And triumph's darling garland won,

I yield to none, but still must say
Their valour keen but churned up spray
And foam at Killiecrankie!

The shout of war and flashing sword,
The maze of echo and her tremor,
The rush of men that drip the sward
With blood and gruesome deeds of terror,
Are gone! their foot-prints overgrown!
And peace claims all things as her own,
Embowered in Killiecrankie!

Now when I think of man's career,
Where worth is hid and folly rules,
Where greed hath still the lion's share,
And fame doth praise the greatest fools;
I see how folly bribes the brave,
And hear it as the waters rave
And rage through Killiecrankie!

Nay, folly sure will take the wise,
That they may stumble into wrong,
That naught of human 'neath the skies
May blameless pass and curse the throng,
But humbled by the sin they know,
May seek the grace God can bestow
'Gainst death and Killiecrankie!

THE OSPREY'S NEST.

Upon a castle old and gray,
That stands upon a lonely isle,
Within a loch whose ripples play
In sun and shade, and time beguile,
I saw enthroned the osprey's nest
Of Loch-an-eilein!

Rare spot! if beauty made its choice,
Where forests fair and hills surround,
Where clear and sweet is echo's voice,
Whose notes from rocks and hills rebound,
And whisper to the osprey's nest
Of Loch-an-eilein!

The stream is loath to bid farewell
Unto the loch, its mother dear,
To journey where it cannot tell,
Where hope is never free of fear,
Afar from osprey in its nest
Of Loch-an-eilein!

Oh, fair the mount upon the west,
Between it and the river Spey,
Where many a bird hath built its nest,
With love its one care all the day!
E'en like the osprey in her nest
Of Loch-an-eilein!

When Spring returns and clothes anew
The earth with green 'neath sunny sky,
And gives for frost the sparkling dew,
For wailing storm the cuckoo's cry,
Home comes the osprey to her nest
Of Loch-an-eilein!

From year to year these birds have come,
The osprey and his mate, to share
The joy of love, the rest of home,
Their callow brood to feed with care,
Until their wings grow o'er the nest
In Loch-an-eilein!

Ere rowan berries ripen red,
Or corn turns golden in the glen,
The osprey with her brood has fled
Beyond Braemar and human ken,
And leaves the winds to air her nest
In Loch-an-eilein!

Oh, happy bird! from year to year
Thou hast returned and found thy nest,
Repeating still thy summer cheer,
The joy of love with safety blest,
Upon the shoulder of the tower
In Loch-an-eilein!

The gray sauch blooms and waves around,
The ivy crowns the castle wall,
While high upon its western bound
The osprey's nest o'erlooketh all,
A hollow heap of sticks, yet gems
This Loch-an-eilein!

For there the eagle finds his home,
And trains his brood for speed and fight,
Afar o'er oceans broad to roam,
And soaring high in sunshine bright,
In realms whence earth seems poor and dark,
E'en Loch-an-eilein!

Yet after all thy wanderings far,
In regions man hath never trod,
Beneath the light of sun or star,
O'er mountains stern and oceans broad,
With spring thou dost return to rest
On Loch-an-eilein!

In compass of the world round,
Its wondrous gardens under thee,
A sweeter spot thou hast not found
Than where thy nest sits high and free,
Amid a thousand hills of prey
In Loch-an-eilein!

Oh, happy bird! who royal knows,
And knows when royal is his lot,
Who swerves not from the thing he chose,
Of all the earth the sweetest spot!
Where first love tineth not its youth
In Loch-an-eilein!

IAN M'DIARMID.

By a stream at the foot of the great Meal Girdy,
That hastes to the Lochay's wave clear and cold,
Dwelt Ian M'Diarmid, a sage man and hardy,
In a lowly hut of primitive mould.

The scene may entrance, and may well bewilder
With forms that are lovely, superbly grand,
And speak of the wise and mighty Builder
Of the dell and the moor and the mountain land!

The chinky walls of the hut were uneven,
And the weathered stones were unhewn and rough,
While the dark, dun roof, of the brackens woven,
Was rigged with the blue-bell that waved on the turf!

The wind, it blew over this humble cabin,
And compassed its contour both gaunt and bare,
As it flapped its wings like a hungry raven,
That evermore croaks and on little must fare!

Within this cottage so poor and so meagre,
Abideth a man of full ninety years,
Of a spirit heroic and clear and eager,
As Atlas the mountain of time he bears!

I asked if he knew of the misty Corrie,
And the mountains that clustered in silence around;
Of each and of all he knew well the story,
Whate'er he saw there it was all native ground!

He pointed afar to the gray, misty Corrie,
His guidance it led me at length to the dell;
'Twas truth that he told me, truth only the story
That the lips of wise age to the pilgrim did tell!

The younger men there, they could say naught about it,
Too many far miles beyond their poor ken!
He knew well the spot, and no man should doubt it,
For his were the secrets of time and the glen!

Benheskernich far, that o'ertops the dim Corrie,
The king of the mountains keeps guard o'er the glen,
M'Diarmid, he showed me, and also the quarry—
The game that I sought in the mist-covered den!

Ah! sure this our life is only a vapour!
To Benheskernich's crown it toiling doth stray,
As it clings to the crags and ascendeth with labour,
And the summit once gained, ah! it fadeth away!

Fair youth may not know the weird, misty Corrie,
Save when taken in sleep and by death borne away;
But deaf though age be he heareth its story,
And thither, though blind, he shows the sure way!

BLITHE, BLITHE, O BLITHE WAS SHE.

Blithe, blithe, O blithe was she!
No happy heart could blither be!
Sweet the look she threw on me,
Blither more I'll never see!

As the snowdrop decks the green
In the face of winter keen,
So her smile was ever seen
On the cloud like silver sheen!

Gone is she to distant day,
Where mortal feet can never stray,
Beyond the realms of decay,
And higher than the Milky Way!

ALLAN'S LOVELY DAUGHTER.

Upon the craig that shows his crest
  Above the Avon water,
And hails the winds come from the west,
  Dwells Allan's lovely daughter!

On lily white the pink wild rose
  Doth blush 'neath summer sky,
So on her cheek the red bloom grows
  Beneath her beaming eye!

As in the dells of hazel brown
  The sunshine softly gleams,
Among the shadows up and down,
  And flashes on the streams,

So shines the lustre of her eye,
  The love of night and day,
A blending of the earth and sky
  That makes the greenwood gay!

Her hair is like the raven's wing,
  Or cloud on sunny steep,
Above the brooks that laughing sing,
  And fountains clear that weep!

As 'mong the cherries red and sweet
  The joyous merle warbles,
So from her lips a music meet,
  Like water o'er the pebbles!

Her bosom is a dell of snow
Among the mountains high,
A virgin dale where beauties grow
Known only to the sky!

Sweet flower! bloom on! and may no harm
E'er mar thee, root or blossom,
But may the Lord keep thee from harm,
Forever in His bosom!

THE TILLYPOURIE.

As down the Tay I wandered slow,
And heard its music soft and sweet,
And saw the reapers barley mow,
'Mong homes of men in blest retreat,
In woodland shade and heathy brae,
I northward stepped across the Tay,
And came to Tillypourie.

When up the bridle path I went,
A narrow and a rugged way,
Where of the stones the feet took tent,
And nature at her leisure lay,
I came in hearing of the song
Of waters in a merry throng,
The dance of Tillypourie!

At length I came upon the stream,
As down the steps of rock it ran,
In vision like a Jacob's dream
Of gladness coming down to man!

As 'neath the hazel and the birk,
And fir tree with its shadow mirk,
  There sang the Tillypourie!

No gloomy fences bar the sight
  Of thy sweet face from human eye,
Nor jealous woods secure thee quite
  From gladness of the smiling sky!
But here in shade and there in sun,
Half coy, yet frank thy wave doth run,
  Thou winsome Tillypourie!

Full glad I am men have not thought
  Thy charms a prize that art might win,
They then had havoc on thee wrought,
  Had hid thy face, and hushed thy din
With wood as dense and dark as night,
And hid thee quite from common sight,
  Thy death, O Tillypourie!

With lodges and with gates and walks,
  With labels on thy every feature,
Where make-believe with eye-glass stalks,
  The strutting shadow of a creature!
Then mincing affectation's ways
Had banished nature from the braes,
  And buried Tillypourie!

I did not see thee join the Tay,
  Nor trace thy waters to the spring,
Yet sure I am thy life is gay,
  Nor stands in need of anything.

Still o'er thy wave may rowans red
Their autumn glory yearly shed,
Thy crown, O Tillypourie!

My steps go east across the moor,
To Pitlochrie and up the Garry;
What further fate I may endure,
Its tale on time, I trow, must tarry!
But be it long, or be it short,
'Tis well if it can boast the sport
Of thy heart, Tillypourie!

THE LASS O' DURINE MOOR.

The wind and rain were driving hard
As I went over Durine moor,
But what I saw did well reward
The toil my limbs had to endure.

For there I saw a little maid,
Not long into her teens was she,
Like sportive lamb on gowan glade
She skipping ran and came to me.

With innocent, inquiring gaze
She marked the pilgrim passing by,
She gave me welcome in her face,
The star of love in beauty's sky!

Full many sights that day could please,
As moss and loch I did explore,
But what were one and all of these
To that sweet lass on Durine moor?

Ben Laoghal * o'er the Kyle of Tongue,
Ben Hee, Ben Hope, and Foinaven,
Loch Eriboll the bard has sung,
And others strange to common ken,

In drapery of light and shade
Their forms inspired me with delight,
But could not match the little maid
With innocence and love bedight!

Upon her neck the raven hair
Hung like a cloud in moon-lit snow,
The budding rose her cheek did bear
With blushes flower could never show!

Her lips were of the heather red,
And softly sweet she answered me,
Her speech was like a clover bed,
Or scent of spices out at sea!

The words that passed between were few,
Of names of places and the way,
And when I bade her swift adieu
She vanished like an April day!

She ran into the field of corn
Where harvesters cut down the grain;
With looks uncheerie and forlorn
They laid the sheaves out in the rain!

She ran, forsooth, and made a strap
Whereon the shearer laid his sheaf,
A stranger she to fell mishap,
The burdens and the sighs of grief!

* Pronounce, Ben Loyal.

And may thy strap of life be firm,
Yea, bind up years might envy grieve,
Nor loosen from mishap or storm,
But give the reaper joy at eve!

Blithe be thy smile! and may thy word
Prove song to hearts that are bereaven,
Thine eye like morn that wakes the bird
To rise from dust and soar to heaven!

THE MOORS OF BALNAGOWN.

Oh! gladsome is the heather bloom
Wherever it may chance to grow,
Upon the moorlands' bog and gloom,
Or hills that catch the sunset glow!

And royal is its purple robe
Beneath the dawn or evening star,
But lovelier heath boasts not the globe
Than on Carhoolie, yont Novar!

The hill of Fyrish, fair to view!
With tranquil peaks o'erlooks the plain,
With wood and rock of blended hue
It hails the sailor from the main!

A stream meanders round its base,
In channel deep with waterfalls,
The waves they have a merry race
Where echo unto echo calls!

Nor Fyrish hill, nor woodland burn
A-tossing in its rocky bed,
Engage mine eye when once I turn
And view the mount with heather spread!

Amid the fir woods, darkly green,
The mansion of Ardross uprears
Its tower above a lovely scene,
And blest if sight could banish fears!

But north Ardross, above the firs,
A fire doth glow both high and wide,
O'er heather bloom the moorcock whirrs,
Then dives within its breast to hide!

What glory on Carhoolie glows!
Where strays the red deer at his will
O'er heather bloom, a red, red rose,
Whose perfume winds about the hill!

And when my day of life must end,
As in the west my sun goes down,
Oh, may I through the shadows wend
As o'er these moors of Balnagown!

ES-CALALLAN—THE FALL OF THE FAIR MAID.

Oh! green the channel o'er the rocks,
And airy is the foam
That shakes its spray upon the flocks
That haunt thy desert home!

The rocks spread wide below, thy feet
  The waving brackens busk,
Where all thy waters part and meet,
  And hum from dawn to dusk.

Upon the cliffs attending thee
  The birch and rowan stand,
But for thyself no living tree
  Would haunt the desert strand!

And who art thou I now behold
  But Es-calallan fair?
Of thee a story strange is told,
  And that has brought me here.

From Kyle-sku inn one autumn day
  O'er Croc-na-craig I went,
'Mong darksome lochs and boulders gray,
  On Es-calallan bent.

But why see Es-calallan more
  Than many waterfalls
Which greet the ear with distant roar,
  That roams through echo's halls?

It falleth from a dizzy height,
  Sheer o'er the mountain's side,
A foaming crest of dazzling white,
  A vail for comely bride!

I must see Es-calallan fair,
  For what tradition saith
Of counter loves in combat there
  Made one in tragic death!

A beauteous maiden kept her sheep
Among the mountains gray,
In corries green and valleys deep,
For many a sunny day.

For Croc-na-craig and Glasven stern,
Though armoured o'er with rock,
And crowned with many a native cairn
The strength of man would mock,

Have many a dimple soft and green
Within their wrinkles hard,
Where stream and loch adorn the scene,
And win the eye's regard.

Calallan was the maiden young
Who kept her sheep with care,
Her beauty tempted many a tongue
To praise, and vow and swear!

But one she scorned and would not hear
Would force her to his will,
She 'scaped his grasp, and ran like fear
Adown the rocky hill!

The race was down, and in and out,
By rock, and loch and stream;
Fast did he run and fiercely shout,
And she as wildly scream!

As timid hare hard pressed by hound,
Whose eyes look still behind,
She sees him come o'ertaking ground,
And to all else is blind!

He hurries on like thunder hard
  Upon the lightning's step,
And lo, she bounds and clears the sward,
  O'er rocks a dreadful leap!

Her keen pursuer close at hand,
  His hot breath on her neck,
His eager force could not withstand,
  But fell upon her wake!

Their footing lost, with shriek and roar
  They dived the foam adown!
Their passage then none might explore,
  Nor guess where they had gone!

Their bodies vanished in the way,
  Or changed their hue and form,
And there they are unto this day,
  Love in distress and storm!

For seldom love persuades the fair,
  Or beauty conquers love,
But disappointment and despair
  From man true bliss remove!

Where one desires, the other fears,
  And such together meet,
A raging waterfall of tears
  On rugged rocks that beat!

THE RACE WITH TIME.

O, Time and I were twins,
  We both were born together,
And bound as close as skins,
  The one tacked to the other.

In days when we were small,
  With frolic he was crazy;
He would not walk but crawl,
  And told me to be easy.

The world was wide, he said,
  That we should play the rover;
When youth was on my head,
  My feet should stray in clover.

But, ah! this arch deceiver,
  Who linked himself to me,
Soon proved a cruel reiver,
  As I was made to see.

At first he would not walk,
  I ran and drew him after;
My haste he did but mock
  With gusts of idle laughter.

When out of breath I ran,
  In chasing some to-morrow,
And saw life was a span,
  And fain of Time would borrow;

Then Time he ran before,
And drew me at his heel,
While glancing fled each hour
As fire struck from the steel.

As ever faster grows the pace,
Ah! shame he makes me feel,
Who vaunting, once had led the race,
Now dragged behind his heel!

KINCARDINE-ON-THE-FORTH.

It was upon the month of June,
At gloamin' when the sun went north,
And day was nigh his utmost length,
I saw Kincardine-on-the-Forth.

The thunder clouds had passed away,
Their arrows spent of fire and hail,
The lap of earth was gay and green,
The mavis sang in hawthorn dale!

Old Tulliallan castle stood
In densest shade of sylvan bower,
That clad its rude and naked form
With all the beauty of the hour!

The gloamin' light with mingled shade
Of mountains south and west and north,
Fell soft, and touched with silver dim
The winding links of dreamy Forth!

Kincardine stood upon the bank,
As she had stood from long ago,
The waters lay before her face,
Asleep between the ebb and flow!

The sky was clear above her head,
The smoke went up into the blue,
And lost itself in hollow deep,
Where cawed the rooks as home they flew.

The streets were clean, the faces few
Shone out from window and from door,
Nor bustling vanity nor grief
Disturbed the leisure of the hour.

The talk was low, the air was peace,
No whirl there of endless chase,
A quiet joy abode therein,
Like smile upon a dreamer's face!

Unwonted calm in any town
On night that ends the toiling week,
Yet happy prelude to the rest
That Sabbath brings unto the meek!

This clear and tranquil air holds out
The symbol of a better state
Than proud ambition makes for man,
With all its hurry and debate!

What great advantage over thee,
Thou sunny, sweet Kincardine town!
Have cities great that flame and smoke,
And burn the lives of mortals down?

Though small thou art, I hear of thee
The story of a fortune rare,
As pearls held in tiny shells
May shame the mice that mountains bear!

I know a house within thy bounds,
A manse that boasts a hundred years,
Where death has found no entrance yet
For wailing grief and burning tears!

And, stranger still it yet may seem,
How new life teems upon thy hearth,
Thou dame demure and grave in look,
Within whose bosom hideth mirth!

Of one good man I heard this tale:
His wife had borne him five times o'er
A dower of twins, and then returned
To single tribute as before.

When she had placed the infant lone,
With matron pride upon his knee,
He straight complained that she had ceased
To give him double measured glee!

Adieu! Kincardine-on-the-Forth,
Rare treasure is with thee!
And who alive can guess thy worth
May price the deep, deep sea!

THE LASS O' ROGIE.

As I cam' owre Strathpeffer braes,
When rigs o' corn were yellow,
While by the path were blae the slaes,
And gowden woods were mellow,
O, there I met a bonnie lass,
As fair as ever stepped on grass,
And spread the dew afore her.

Her cheeks were rosy as the morn,
Her hair as black's a raven,
Her brow as white as snaw new born
Upon a hill-side wreathen;
Her lips were like the crimson heath,
And sweet as is the honey breath
O' bloom whaur bees are feastin'!

Her een were o' an azure deep,
Wi' gleams o' sparklin' glances,
Her eelids even when asleep
Had mortals thrown in trances;
But open, oh! a vision dreid
Afore the gaze o' men half deid,
Wha lo'e but canna venture!

O, we were young, and love was born
As soon as met our glances,
Ere pride could lift a look o' scorn,
Or caution seal love's fancies.
My heart is thine, O maiden fair!
Grant me thy lovè, nor let despair
O'ertake thy willing captive!

Her smile and blush and lips said Yea,
Her face, O it was vogie!
My joy was madder than the spray
Foams owre the linn o' Rogie!
Linked airm in airm, and heart wi' heart,
We met that day nae mair to pairt
Till death our fate shall sever!

Our love's aye young and warm and true,
Our marriage stands the weather;
Though years hae run we never rue
The day we did forgether,
When corn was yellow on the brae,
And mid the heath the berries blae
Dyed deep the lips o' lovers!

IN MEMORY OF THE REVD. WILLIAM STORRAR,

MINISTER OF THE UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF HARDGATE-OF-URR, WHO DIED ON THE 20TH APRIL, AND WAS BURIED ON FRIDAY, 24TH APRIL, 1896.

From Hardgate manse, upon a sunny brae,
Beside a well whose waters break from gloom,
And rise with gleaming joy to hail the day,
A funeral train doth slowly seek the tomb.

A hearse of ebon hue now leads the way,
Whose sides transparent show the freight of death,
A coffin dark, bedecked with crystal spray
Of light on silver and a flowery wreath.

Adown the road the trooping mourners go,
A people sad at heart and touched with grief,
Like hoar-frost in the shade contemns the glow
Of April sunshine gleaming on the leaf.

The day is bright, the fields are fresh and green,
The gowan ere its time doth flower the plain,
The cuckoo's note begins to haunt the scene,
And speaks of golden summer come again.

The day is but a parable of faith,
Of resurrection in the face of death,
Of life beyond the trouble and the scaith
Attending him who lives on mortal breath.

But as he walks in shade who draweth near
Unto a mountain steep and dark and high,
That looms between him and the glowing sphere
Of day's bright orb upon the verge of sky;

E'en so the icy shade of death is here,
The blow new struck, the angel not yet gone,
Of form immense and high and face severe,
Suspends the pulse and turns young hearts to stone.

Now with a look of pride he views his prey,
And notes the tears of those who feel his might;
For he was young and choice now turned to clay,
A warrior in the van of life's brave fight.

I knew him well, an April son was he,
Bright as the day that lights this lovely vale;
His mind was clear as morn upon the sea,
And high his aim, as lark that heaven doth hail.

As crystal of Mont Blanc that sparkles bright,
  The amethyst that burns with day's pure glow,
His soul sincere, suffused with heaven's light,
  Was fired with truth his lips to men did show.

Nine years of consecrated youth he bore
  The standard of the cross, unfurling broad
The gospel flag the eyes of men before,
  That they might read and trust the love of God.

An echo of his voice will linger long
  By Hardgate steep, Springholm, and Crocketford;
Nith, Urr, and Dee his memory prolong,
  And link his name with the Eternal Word.

Kirkpatrick-Durham height and Corsock howe,
  Fair Carlin-wark, and where the Deugh and Ken
Their waters gather from the mountain's brow,
  And train to song adown the bosky glen,

Have heard his voice in street and wilderness,
  And seen his graceful form, alert and lithe,
His raven locks a brow of snow caress,
  And face of light and love, so winsome, blithe!

Within the land of Fife his cradle lies,
  Be-south the Lomond hills, nigh Leven's wave,
On Leslie bank that basks in sunny skies:
  Now Urr's fair bosom is his kindly grave.

Brief, brief his course, to love's fond memory dear,
  The weeping widow and her tender bairns,
The parents lorn who shed the silent tear
  Of sorrow unexpressed that dumbly yearns.

Behind him he has left these children four,
Against the corners of the vailèd sky,
To stem the fury of the stormy hour,
And plead the shielding love of God on high.

And his lone widow, wise of heart and true,
An ornament of love, devotion rare,
May God refresh her with the precious dew
Of that sweet promise which His widows share!

'Tis true, he died in youth, an April day,
When sight and sound invoked a summer long;
And he who sowed the seed is 'neath the clay
Will yet bear harvest and the reaper's song.

His form is here, all that of earth was his,
And waits the appointed resurrection hour;
His soul with Christ is in the realms of bliss,
And of an endless life now knows the power!

IN MEMORY OF THE REVD. ROBERT LINDSAY,

WHO DIED AT MINNYPOOL MANSE, CREETOWN, 23RD AUGUST, 1894.

THERE stands the manse where lived my friend for long,
Upon a steep, embowered above the waves
Of Minnypool, that chants a rural song,
And dreams of greatness where the Solway raves.

In garden fair, where blooms the apple tree,
We sat, or paced about, Cairnsmore in view,
While from his breast would shadows often flee,
And fade away 'neath heaven's arching blue.

Or, when the burning sun did rule the day,
And drank the waters of the languid stream,
We sought the wood, and saw the silent play
Of light and shade as in a waking dream.

We then would talk of days long gone from earth,
When youth stepped forth to hail the dewy morn,
To swim the deep sea's wave of bounding mirth,
And face the breakers with a joyous scorn ;

Or climb the hill, and from the topmost height
Hope's kindling eye saw all the world and more,
And spoke of human life and that true Light
Which spans the gulf and shows the distant shore.

Our Alma Mater we did oft recall,
Whose dusky arch o'erhung the High Street brae
Of Glasgow town, whose thick November pall
Our scarlet gowns be-dimmed with grimy gray.

Then memory would rehearse the fleeting time
We spent in Queen Street Hall above the Forth,
Where fair Edina on a throne sublime
Her sceptre wields o'er regions south and north.

Anon we leave the halls of lore behind,
He for the south, the realm of martyr-land,
Where Cree rolls on, a tawny flood and blind,
The silver lost in Solway's troubled sand.

My tent was pitched upon the westering Clyde,
Its breadth between Dumbarton Rock and home,
Where day and night forever flowed the tide,
And oft the sea-horse breaker white with foam.

There go the ships adown the narrow stream
Between the beacons red that ward off harm,
Whose mighty bulk moves on with sail and steam,
And length of keel outspans three waves of storm.

There up and down they pass in silent mood,
The crested foam a-rippling from the beak,
Save when the fog-horn's accents hoarse and rude
Find echo's answer from the mountain peak.

So fled the days I spent upon the Clyde,
A line of phantoms on oblivion's way,
Whose trace of foam upon the swelling tide
Doth quietly sink, of waters deep the prey.

Save when the thunder dark eclipsed the sun,
And clammy tremor seized both earth and sky,
My days like sheeted ghosts sped one by one,
And swift as swallows to my dreaming eye.

The Clyde behind, I travelled to the dawn,
And spent, where Esk's deep channelled waters croon,
Three years of days, that sped across the lawn
Like deer athwart a shepherd's afternoon.

I left the Lothian dell where poppies bloom,
And deck the fields of wheat with scarlet gay,
Where waters wander through the woodland gloom,
And through the vail of night behold the day ;

To sojourn in the valley of the Ken,
The shrine of nature sweet, and passing far
The Pentland hills and classic Hawthornden,
As yon high sun doth pale the twinkling star.

For years of fellowship, in number ten,
We came and went o'er Galloway's gray moor,
Between the tidal Cree and silver Ken,
In fiery train past Cairnsmore's granite Door,

Where Garpol warbles o'er the shaded rock,
And bridles haste within the Holy Linn,
Where faithful preachers fed the hunted flock,
And bairns baptized while screened by foaming din.

Where Lochinvar's blue eye the waste adorns,
Whose bosom deep the summer skies illume,
And purple bloom of autumn's glorious morns,
Where steps the shepherd lass in youth's fair bloom.

We spent the choicest days of all the year,
While hummed the bee upon the heathy brae,
And heard the curlew's strains ring high and clear,
Where fleecy clouds athwart the azure stray.

Upon the Molloch crown with giant stride,
Among aspiring pines with glee he sped;
With Scaur my dog attending at his side,
He saw in aspect fair a world outspread.

The trees grow fast, and now forbid the view
That we together saw in summer light;
The gaze is upward into heaven's blue,
And earth's fair picture is withdrawn from sight.

Together now we see the dawn no more,
That kindles on the breast of broad Millyea,
Nor hail the spring upon the Solway shore,
When primrose bloom makes all the woodland gay.

No more we pace the garden on the brae,
'Mid apple trees, and mark the swallow's chase,
The glow of sunset on gray Cairnsmore play,
And light with heaven's fire his time-worn face.

Still through the wood the Minnypool may croon
Melodious murmurs in her stony bed,
And shine in silver 'neath the ghostly moon,
When wains of golden sheaves are homeward led.

And now she plays the pibroch of my friend,
With heavy sighs, while falls the ash tree's leaf
Before the early frost, that marks the end
Of life's fair harvest and her pleasures brief.

He held aloft a calm and silent way,
His head above the clouds that wrapped his breast,
My friend now gone, as some fair summer day
Of high, bright sun hath circled to the west.

A sister lone bemoans him by the Cree,
Who decked her brother's home with love and flowers;
And now she hears the deep, unmeasured sea,
That draws unto itself time's fleeting hours.

His modest worth and suasive, manly mien
Esteem of all, both far and near, could claim;
And for his flock his memory ever green
Has found in loving hearts the mead of fame.

His place of birth is 'mong the Sanquhar hills,
The native haunt of freedom and of truth:
And he now rests where ocean ebbs and fills
Whose cradle song was hummed in Auchengruith.

Farewell, my friend! thy sleep in Christ secure,
By Balloch's cradle song lulled night and day,
While Solway flows upon his tawny floor,
And light and shade on Cairnsmore's bosom play!

Until the trumpet sound shall wake the dead,
And lead to bliss supreme the sons of God;
Their night of sorrow then forever fled,
With heaven's high dawn upon the dewy sod!

THE HILL OF BARÔNE IN BUTE.

Upon Mont Blanc, whose dome of snow
Looks down on Europe's glory wide,
Where once I felt the noon-day glow
Pulse through my heart with many a tide,
Mine eye beheld a wondrous scene
Of summer fair and winter stern,
The icy steep and the valley green,
The flowery mead and the hoary cairn;
But all I saw from that lofty throne
I would freely give for the hill of Barône!

Upon Ben Nevis I have stood,
Lochaber's hills and glens around,

And seen the Hebridëan flood,
  Whose waves against the isles resound ;
While o'er Loch Eil the eagle flew,
  And poised above deep, dark Glencoe,
The mountain land like heaven blue,
  Save here and there a gem of snow ;
But all I fondly throw away
For this Barône and love in May !

JOHNNIE PEEP'S DREAM.

Wee Johnnie Peep,
He fell asleep,
A prey to Willie Winkie,
Who well can bear
What men may dare,
E'en with his little pinkie.

He Johnnie took,
And would not brook
A wriggle or a tussle,
But bore him up,
On dreams to sup,
While gluttons late did guzzle.

He Johnnie bore,
As he did soar
Above this Babel muddle ;
His forty winks
Surpassed the drinks
That seasoned topers fuddle.

On wings he flew
As web on dew
Of spider gossamer ;
Poor Johnnie lay,
Fell Willie's prey,
As he through clouds did fare.

He rose, he rose
Above the snows
That mantle Himalaya,
Yea, mounted high
Into the sky
Was painted blue by Freya !

They reached the moon,
Were there as soon
As one might step the gutter ;
Vast regions there
They found them bare,
Nor sheep, nor cows, nor butter !

They met with Cain,
Who walked with pain,
'Neath thorns a burden ever,
He would let go
Did he but know
How cords of brass to sever !

There with his dog
In sun and fog,
In every kind of weather,
His daily round
On moorland ground,
The moon's bleak, birsled heather !

As dragon fly
That bizzes by,
The bad man's darning needle,
Wee Willie Wag
With Johnnie Brag
Pursued intent to breed ill.

To other side
Of moonland wide,
That lights this earthen bubble,
Wee Willie flew
As one who knew
To toss a soul in trouble!

O'er mountains high,
That touch the sky
That spans the realm of yonder,
They soared in haste,
O'er craggy waste,
O'er craters deep did ponder!

And as they flew
Where forms no dew
On shaw or darksome hollow,
Where falls no rain
On hill or plain,
Nor spring the frost doth follow,

Wee Johnnie fain
Had been in Spain,
'Mid orange groves or apple,
To slake his thirst,
Though he should burst
In cooling down his thrapple!

And as they sail
A windless vale,
A crater deep and soundless,
Gray cliffs around
His eyes astound
With fear and wonder boundless!

Now lo! they see
A gorgeous tree,
That crowns the rock with glory,
With apples rare,
O! sweet and fair
As e'er were sung in story!

When Willie spied
The fruit that lied
As apples of Sodoma,
And Johnnie saw,
Nor marked the flaw
Of promise in Gomorrha,

In twinkling haste
Across the waste,
They light upon its clusters,
As hive of bees
The meadow sees,
And for the blossom musters!

When lo! the branch,
As choicest haunch
Of venison for palate,
Broke clean away,
With golden spray,
And fell like Pontius Pilate!

Down, down it fell!
Ah! who can tell
How far what falls forever?
Right through the moon,
Where lorn winds croon
As subterranean river!

Then followed fast,
Like stone down cast,
Wee Willie seeking pleasure,
While Johnnie cried,
And eager tried
To clutch the falling treasure!

On, on they sped,
Through regions dead,
The moon's dry river bosom,
Where rocks are bare,
Nor ever wear
Green moss or summer blossom!

Through darkness dense,
With dread intense,
The dreamer rode the tunnel,
Till morning broke
Upon the rock,
As widened out the funnel,

Until they saw,
Without a flaw
Of vision in the distance,
Cain walking round
His moorland ground,
The fate of his existence!

They nearer drew,
And then did view
A rare, outstripping wonder,
The apple branch
Hung o'er the haunch
Of Cain as he did wander!

Upon a thorn
'Twas hung in scorn,
Behind his back did dangle;
He fain would grasp,
But could not clasp
The sense-deceiving spangle!

John drew the thorn,
And like the morn
His face shone forth with gladness,
When with it came,
As he did frame,
The fruit of joy and madness!

As lightning flew
The frantic two,
Through space's hollow bosom;
With golden branch
John hoped to staunch
A thirst within was gruesome!

He crunched with haste
Was sweet to taste
A sleek and golden apple,
That turned to dust
And bitter crust
Before it reached his thrapple!

They came in sight
Of earth while night
Was brooding over Sweden,
While cried the fox
Among the rocks,
A plaint with sorrow laden!

Within his hand,
As flaming brand
Alit with furious passage,
The thorn of Cain
Took fire amain,
And crackled fierce and savage!

The brand he threw
Where pine trees grew,
Lit fire that none might vanquish;
The flames arose,
A thousand woes!
Cries rent the rocks with anguish!

Out from their lair,
In wild despair,
The bears and wolves ran howling,
Rushed down the steep
Into the deep,
To death and darkness, growling!

The roaring fire,
With fury dire,
O'er Sweden spread, and Norway;
From mount and vale
Arose the wail
That saw shut fast hope's doorway!

They echo woke,
Whose thunder broke
Across the snowy mountains;
While fiery heat,
With throbbing beat,
Did boil the frozen fountains!

The hectic cloud,
As fire-dyed shroud,
The rending wind doth shiver,
Threw back the scad
Of flame gone mad
On lake and foaming river!

And by its light
A passage bright
Streamed o'er the quivering billow,
Where gleamed the spray
With smouldering ray,
Disturbing night's green pillow!

The licking flame
Did Willie blame,
The pine crash with its thunder,
As on he flew
And held in view
The bonfire burning under!

Upon the wing,
As from the string
Shoots forth the glancing arrow,
Wee Willie sped
O'er ocean's bed,
On earth is not his marrow!

The tumbling whales,
The pirate sails,
Smacks, schooners, and three-masters,
The men-of-war
With lion roar,
Dread heaving monster-wasters!

Rode on the tide
Of ocean wide,
In whirlwind and hail storm,
With bending mast
That creaked aghast
When drawing near the Maelstrom!

Then John in haste
Threw on the waste
Of sea a golden apple,
The fishes all,
Both great and small,
For that same fruit did grapple!

The fun was prime,
From time to time
He threw another tempter,
The crowding fish
He fain would dish
Within the Maelstrom hamper!

The more he threw
The wilder grew
The uproar and commotion,
In shoals they came,
Their scales like flame
Lit up the heaving ocean!

Within a cloud
O'er Maelstrom loud
Fell Willie paused to ponder,
As poising hawk
Whose eye doth stalk
The realm where prey doth wander.

Oh what a sight !
The mouth of night !
All life therein doth rumble,
The dog-fish fierce,
His teeth they pierce,
While spout the whales and tumble !

The walrus' teeth,
They threaten death,
Yet never seize the apple ;
The serpent great
Is there in state,
King thirst within his thrapple !

His body long
And supple, strong,
But late had girthed the world,
Encloses round
The Maelstrom ground,
In countless coils is curled !

The coils they form
A wall 'gainst storm,
The rage of life in passion,
Where man and fish
Within his dish
Are held in deadly fashion !

He threw a swipe
Around a ship,
A coil that crushed her timbers,
As band-box frail
Of slender spale
That crimples into flinders !

With counsel wise,
In warlike guise,
The higher raised his coiling,
Crushed ships and whales,
As masts and sails
Plunged deep in waters boiling !

Now Johnnie threw
With aim most true
His last and choicest apple,
The serpent's mouth
Oped wide uncouth,
And sucked it down his thrapple !

Then at the sight,
With dread affright,
Wee Willie shook his flappers,
And Johnnie fell
Headlong pell mell,
To feed the serpent's happers !

Wee Willie fled
As dream that's sped
From him who wakes at dawning,
While Johnnie fell,
And thought that hell
Beneath for him was yawning !

The shining teeth,
The rasping death
Beneath his fancy quivering,
Drove sleep away
At break of day,
As Johnnie wakened shivering!

His mother's kiss,
Oh, that was bliss!
From night-shade dreams defending,
While day and sun
Was heaven begun,
A gruesome voyage ending!

But that is woe,
Though sleep forego,
Which waits the wretch's waking,
Who rests in sleep,
But wakes to weep
The truth when day is breaking!

Live thou in love!
Seek things above!
Be reconciled to Heaven!
Then night nor day
May break the sway
Of peace that God has given!

FOR A YOUNG LADY'S ALBUM.

O MAIDEN young and tall, of grace serene,
With stately step, and of as queenly mien
As any belles of Ayr!

What shall I write within thy winsome book,
Where roameth poesy, a living brook,
And plays with pearls rare ?

Thy home an Eden is, a lofty throne,
Where beauty reigns o'er all the sun shines on,
Mount, moor, and sweet wild thyme ;
On Craigie heights, where blooms the golden whin,
And stars sail past above the world's din,
In a supernal clime !

An Eden home as thou dost walk with God,
And hear his voice when spring winds kiss the sod
And day declines from noon.
On Tabor mount then commune with the sky,
With Him who lives while all of earth must die,
And pass away like June !

And for your Eden should you choose a mate,
To share your love and bliss at heaven's gate,
A king who boasts a queen !
O may your height of joy still higher rise,
With rainbow span that crowns the lofty skies,
Its feet on mountains green !

SPRING ON THE STINCHAR.

O, GLADSOME Spring ! and art thou here again !
In budding wood I hear thy sweet refrain
Bids care and grief begone !
Thy breath on hill and plain makes all things new,
And from thy skirts distils the pearly dew
That gleams beneath the dawn !

For many years I've seen thee on the green,
And marked thy lightsome step, thou beauteous queen
Of all things fair and young!
The blush of morn is on thy ruddy cheeks,
And on thy lids, where love enraptured seeks
The hope that they have sung!

It was an April day, and afternoon,
Adown the wood I strayed and heard the croon
Of Stinchar at my side,
When suddenly I heard the cry "Cuckoo!"
A strange, untutored lay, inspiring, new,
Like love's first hanselled bride!

Behind, to north, upon the wide, high moor,
On lonely lochs and on the mountains hoar
The thunder cloud grew dark;
But where I sped beside the crystal stream
The sky was clear and bright, a happy dream,
Where sang the soaring lark!

Knockdolian proudly rose o'er Colmonell,
In sunshine bathed, he smiled upon the dell,
And glanced around, afar!
Across the hills "the moors and mosses many, O,"
Where sped the lovesick swain to woo his Nannie, O,
'Neath winter moon and star!

No more behind the plough he tells his love
To every breeze that through the dale doth rove
And hum Spring's wanton lay!
Deep sleep he takes, unseen the wind-flower's bloom,
Or primrose bed exhaling sweet perfume
On dimpled woodland brae!

His Nannie, fair and young, and pure as dew,
The faithful heart, whose ardent love was true,
Has vanished from the vale!
Like rainbow beauty from the glooming cloud
When thunders growl, and shadows earth enshroud
As falls untimeous hail!

And gone the bard! but not his deathless song,
That warbles ever as the minstrel throng
Of Spring's eternal choir,
That Stinchar haunts adown this rural dell;
And as the lark his song o'er Colmonell
Shall evermore aspire!

ON THE MARRIAGE OF JOHN LAMBIE AND ISABELLA D. HAMILTON,

25th June, 1903.

The manly bridegroom stood beside the bride,
With beaming eyes that shone with honest pride,
For she was fair, and lovely as the day
Of royal June in all her bright array!

With happy face June saw the twain made one,
The meeting waters twinkling in the sun,
With silver radiance, as they sang love's tale,
And whispered, lingering through the blissful vale!

Long may they journey, winding out and in,
Banks decked with flowers by lane and sounding linn,
The song of birds attendant in the grove,
And melodies of love where'er they rove!

A FLOWER GATHERER.

It was within the month of May,
The year of eighteen ninety-seven,
White was the bloom of sloe-thorn spray,
Serene and blue the face of heaven,
When coming through the land of Fife,
All nature waking into life,
I saw a maiden blithe and gay,
Sweet as the scent of new-mown hay,
Or apple blossom on the tree
Where sings the mavis full of glee!

A sheaf of flowers was in her lap,
A dower of gold and silver bright,
Such flowers as Pluto's self might hap
To gaze upon with wondered sight
When he fair Proserpine o'ertook
On Henna's braes, beside a brook,
The while she plucked the blooming flowers,
And westward skipped with laughing hours,
Unwitting she that night was there
To wrap with shade the vision fair!

Speed on thy way! O vision fair!
A great estate of years be thine,
To gather flowers and scent the air
With fragrance it may never tine!
Dark Pluto at a distance far,
Nor ever may thy pleasure mar,
But, envious view thy upward way,
Beyond the night where death has sway!
Thou and thy flowers to heaven borne,
Where nothing fades nor e'er doth mourn!

DUNCAN BAN MACINTYRE.

Upon a green ridge south Loch Tulla's wave,
Between the streams that travel to her breast,
There Duncan Ban was born in cradle lone
And sung to sleep by nature's artless strains.
She nursed him in her lap and sweetly sang
Of hoary mountains steep, and deeply gashed
With many a bygone flood of thunder storm;
Of herds of deer that grazed in misty glens
And corries green, their borders vailed with shade;
Of crags that overhung the fountains clear,
And nursed the eagles young, that viewed the dawn
With eyes of fire, and plumed their wings for flight.
There Duncan, as the eagles soared and ruled
In fancy free, a wilderness of prey!

ON THE DEATH OF MY MOTHER, MARION CARSWELL,

Born 12th August, 1807, and Died 30th March, 1902.

A true and earnest soul has passed away,
  Of days and labours full, with sorrows keen,
Yet brave of heart to climb the toilsome brae,
  And strong through faith that drew on things unseen!
She with one mind pursued an even path,
E'en as the stars, all heedless of the wrath
Of moody storms, from earth eclipsing heaven!
O, happy they to whom such grace is given!
The garden and the moor, the darksome valley past,
The wilderness behind, and paradise at last!

IN MEMORY OF MRS. MATHER,

ST. JOHN'S MANSE, DALRY, GALLOWAY, WHO DIED ON THE 30TH MARCH, 1902, AGED 94 YEARS.

A TRIBUTE BY MR. THOMAS MURRAY, SHEPHERD, *Author of "Frae the Heather," a volume of Poems.* Edwards, Brechin.

OUR good old friend has passed away,
And all her troubles now are o'er;
For surely she hath reached that shore
Where all is perfect peace and day!

Her day was long, the e'entide drear,
Through which on earth she wrought and lay,
But grace within her breast held sway,
And strength sustained from year to year.

Her work she learned from childhood's day,
And paid the precept well it's due,
As heartily she did pursue
The task unto her hand that lay.

So as she wrought she read with zeal,
For work and knowledge both she loved;
That time and gifts should be improved
She knew, and strove in purpose real.

So with her faithful spouse of youth
The household load did bravely bear,
A gifted family did uprear,
Well nurtured in the ways of truth.

Long years the widow's garb she wore,
And other trials met with, still
Obedient to the Master's will,
In patient resignation bore.

Devoted to the house of God,
No outward show with her was seen,
In modest dress, with cheerful mien,
The aisle she reverently trod.

Her name will long remembrance have,
As ever kindly, straight, and true,
As one whose left hand never knew
What with her right she did or gave.

So her industrious life she led,
And faith beguiled the lengthy way;
Now rests her dust where zephyrs play,
And flowers smile o'er her peaceful bed!

Sleep on, dear friend! Why should we mourn
The call that came to thy relief?
To be with Him of saints the Chief,
And dear ones whom He loves to crown!

IN MEMORY OF JANE S. MURDOCH,

WIDOW OF THE REVD. ALEXANDER PATERSON, M.A., MINISTER OF THE UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, DALRY (GALLOWAY), FROM 1843 TO 1884 A.D., WHO DIED AT EDINBURGH ON THE 23RD JANUARY, 1904.

SLEEP deep and sound within thy kindly bed
Of tawny sand that listens to the Ken!
Whose waters whisper as they pass the dead,
The congregation great of silent men,
Shut out from sun and day, the winsome cheer
That gilds the vale of life from year to year!

Of all who slumber there, none loved so well
St. John's Dalry upon the dimpled brae,
The glamoury of summer in the dell,
Or mountain peaks betouched with ages gray,
The purple moor, the stream, and waving wood,
The guise of nature in her fairest mood!

Yet more than nature's face and witching voice
When she in loveliest raiment doth appear,
And warbles songs the sweetest of the choice,
Whose artless strains enchant the rambler's ear,
The human race, their wide and varied lot,
Both high and low, engaged her heart and thought.

The pen that toiled, the heart that travelled far,
And friendships formed wherever mortals stray,
The thought intent, with radiance like the star,
Whose sparkle keen keeps night and gloom at bay,
Are now at rest with eve, her day's darg done,
Nor wake as they were wont with yonder sun!

Her life was rich, and manifold the dower
That Heaven bestowed from dawn to gloamin' gray,
The charm of beauty and of mental power,
And grace of soul, the love that's born to sway;
A mother too in Israël, I trow,
A vine whose clusters o'er the wall did grow!

On Balmaclellan fells, the purple moors
That busk Drumwhirn, where first she saw the day,
'Twas there she gambolled with the summer hours,
Her locks like morning, with a heart as gay;
While sang the lark above the bridge of Orr
In strains that rang, besieging heaven's door!

'Twas there she grew to womanhood's estate,
As school and kirk engrafted lore and grace
Upon a heart with youth and hope elate,
And threw a suasive light upon the face,
The dower of reason kindled with the glow
Of Heaven's smile where golden apples grow!

Then came the time of love, the tryst ordained,
The bridegroom came, a man of gifts and worth,
The marriage bliss where love and wisdom reigned,
As children came and played upon the hearth;
A generation new, that rose to shine,
With parts that dazzle and with grace divine!

A man of God, her husband did proclaim
The message of the Cross, with lips that knew
The touch of fire that from the altar came,
And with a life refreshed with Heaven's dew;
A cedar full of sap whose boughs were green,
And roots drew strength from sacred depths unseen.

With him athwart a circuit wide and fair,
Sublime and sweet as ever eye did see,
From home to home she travelled here and there,
And shared with him and them life's grief and glee;
To hearts bereaved she tender solace gave,
And filled the sail to climb the rising wave!

In haunts of sickness and of death her feet,
Like steps of angels where the snow-drifts blew,
Went soft and still, the while her lips did greet
With tender accents souls that anguish knew!
So did her presence melt the ice of death,
As spring melts snow with sweet and living breath!

And she who did the haunts of sorrow hail,
Did visit oft the heights of Cana clear,
Where shone the marriage day, that lit the vale
With summer sheen and with uncommon cheer;
When Heaven's smile did water turn to wine,
And gave to human joys a tinge divine!

While sped the years her life still richer grew,
A husband's love and worth, and children fair,
Young olive plants that owned the sun and dew,
And promise gave of clusters ripe and rare;
A mother she in Israël indeed
That many mourn to-day with hearts that bleed!

Thus years together did they love, and dwell
Beneath the Molloch's crown above the Ken,
Whose silver waves by day and nightly swell
Address the eye and ear, and fill the glen
With distant thunder rising from the stream,
That threads its way through sleep, a beauteous dream!

But who with Time can wrestle on the sand ?
Magician strange, who plays delusive freaks,
Whose gifts elude the sanguine, grasping hand,
And ever cheat the heart of him who seeks !
Oh ! life on earth, how narrow is thy span !
A line that has no breadth to answer man !

Her honoured husband passed away from earth.
Full forty years a ministry of love
And truth was his in pulpit and on hearth ;
A man of mind and courage naught could move,
His, too, the tender heart, the life of prayer
That lived with God and breathed celestial air !

She then retires to Scotia's royal town,
Where Holyrood in gray a widow sits,
Her days of splendour and of freedom gone !
She, too, a widow, thither silent flits,
And spends the Indian summer of her time
Where days are chronicled with many a chime.

Thus 'mid the landmarks of a famous past,
Dumb spectres that o'erlook the bustling streets,
For twenty years her widowhood was cast,
Where mansions high and palaces and fêtes
Lead on the dance of quick and heavy pace
As wealth and poverty meet face to face.

Though there at home 'mong kindred near and dear,
The style and splendour of a city life
At her command, in vain such pompous cheer !
Where meagre peace is choked with tumid strife,
As fashion's ivy claspeth fast the tree,
And real distress cries out of fancied glee !

But still, wherever cast, the Christian heart
  May find a field for poem wrought or sung;
And this she found, though in a sphere apart
  From that of former years when life was young;
Thus many threads of varied dyes are spun
To weave the robe of life beneath the sun.

Though fair and grand the scene where life may boast
  The memories of the past, traditions great,
The fragrance of the hawthorn, hoary frost
  Of time and story tinging man's estate,
The wraith of Galloway was there to mock
The Street of Princes and the Castle Rock!

From year to year when days were long and bright,
  And summer camped among the mountains gray,
Touched moor and stream and loch with wondrous light,
  And dyed the brooding cloud upon Millyea
With tints of dawn and eve, a fleece of gold
Surpassing far what Jason sought of old!

She travelled west, and traced anew the track
  Of former steps in scenes of long ago,
To live in times revived, to thought brought back
  From slumber shapeless 'neath oblivion's snow!
'Twas then she braced the cords of friendship old,
From Lethè's wave redeemed the finest gold!

When winter came she to the east again,
  With tedious step and with a lingering heart,
As goes the school-boy with a secret pain
  To tackle tasks anew, while yet the smart

Of severance from holiday and play
Doth inward burn, scarce gone sweet yesterday!

And in an hour that love could not foretell,
With all its subtle comprehension keen,
Death sudden came, and summoned her to dwell
In his gray town, roofs low and hearths unseen!
One journey more from east to native west,
But now in dreamless sleep by Ken to rest!

Light lean the turf upon the breast now still!
Asleep with husband and with sires long gone!
Though Ken may ebb and oft his channel fill,
And spring in season grace the moor and lawn,
She wakes no more to view the gladsome day,
And wend life's wonted path through grave and gay!

Though she is gone her footsteps will remain,
Deep dinted traces in the hearts of men,
Engravure fast, defying sun and rain,
A page of writ that will survive the Ken!
The treasured memories of friends whose love
Has hope to meet with her in bliss above!

And, oh, may He who comes from Gilead's hill
With balm, frankincense, and the sweetest myrrh,
Her offspring dear with heavenly comfort fill,
As on the top of mulberry trees a stir
Of angels' feet they hear, a presage given,
That she who loved her Lord has found His heaven!

GALLOWA.

O FAIR the lands whaur simmer stays,
In rosy bowers through a' the year,
But ah ! they lack the dimpled braes,
The lilts o' sang and halesome cheer
O' life and love in Gallowa !

Let ithers praise the stainless blue,
The lowin' sun that burns the plain,
The gowden corn that kens nae dew,
The flours that bloom whaur grass is nane,
Gie me the dells o' Gallowa !

In orange groves let feast wha will,
And sloke their drouth wi' ilka breath,
Gie me the berries on the hill,
Sae downy blae amang the heath
That busks the rocks o' Gallowa !

The tap o' Cairnsmore proud and hie,
His breist whaur gowden waters spring,
The silver Ken and mossy Dee ;
I trow it would enrich a king,
A glimpse o' bonnie Gallowa !

Her buirdly men, wha tent their flocks
Many bowders gray that lang hae stood,
Keep faithfu' watch as thae fell rocks,
Were left ahint auld Noah's flood,
To graith the breist o' Gallowa.

Her maidens modest, sweet, and braw,
  Primroses on the banks o' Ken,
Cheeks, cherries red without a flaw,
  And lips that steal the hearts o' men,
    They gem the croun o' Gallowa!

As Deugh and Ken their waddin' keep,
  A langsome, taiglin' honeymune,
Now rush in foam, then saftly sleep
  In lanes aneath the roarin' linn,
    Let love and truth sway Gallowa!

While mornin' tints gray Criffel's sward,
  The Solway tides gang here and thither,
And Merrick doth Loch Enoch guard,
  May Scots and freedom leeve thegither,
    Amang the hills o' Gallowa!

IN MEMORY OF JAMES HAMILTON, BRYANTON, FORFARSHIRE,

Who Died at Bryanton, 19th April, 1899.

A true man's dust sleeps here beneath this sod,
  Where blows the Forfar wind from ocean wave,
Or from the Grampians' snow and clouds untrod
  Save by angelic feet, and gales that rave
Athwart the sky involved in thunderous gloom.

Now closed the eyes that saw, with vision clear,
  The signs of rain and sun, and read the moods
Of times and markets prosperous and severe;

Now all alike spring flowers and winter floods,
Hope's prospects bright, and memory's backward gaze!

The lips are still were once with wisdom fraught,
The words of truth, and insight clear and deep,
Wherewith his children dear were daily taught
How they should sow, and life eternal reap
Upon the fields where Heaven's sunshine glows!

The tender heart, the strong and toiling arms,
That used the fleeting hours with purpose high,
Eschewing idle play's delusive charms,
All things that seem, and flashing, haste to die,
Are now at rest with night, day's labour done!

We only dream to think that thou art here,
'Neath this dull sod in earth that knows no sun,
As o'er thy dust we shed the falling tear,
Forgetful all that thou thy race hast run,
And rest is thine beyond the paling stars!

May He who wept o'er Lazarus in the grave,
Who from the bier raised up the widow's son,
And to their weeping friends returning gave
The souls that fled beyond earth's sinking sun,
Impart like joy to those who miss thee here!

The joy o'er Lazarus and the favoured few,
Who in past ages had returned from death,
Was great indeed, although their kindred knew
That in brief time they should exhale the breath
Of this new life, thin vapour blown away!

But, oh! what joy the resurrection bliss,
When those who sleep in Christ shall rise again,
And friend meets friend, who never more can miss
True fellowship of hearts and love's exultant strain,
God's face beheld as mirrored in a friend!

What though the Lord should tarry? He shall come
The quick to change and those who sleep to wake.
Who love His name He surely shall bring home
With gladness great, when Heaven's day doth break
For God's own sons returned from exile far!

God guard our life as He doth guard thy dust,
In keeping safe unto the trump of doom!
And make thy kindred blessed with the just,
Who serve the Lord in sunshine and in gloom,
And follow Christ where'er his pillar leads!

And where that pillar leads they soon shall know
Though through the wilderness it travel long,
As on they march with weary feet and slow;
The grief of eve will end with morning's song,
When camp the tribes on Jordan's other shore!

NIAGARA.

Dread, roaring stream! thy voice shall never cease,
Although the rock 'tween Erie and Ontario
Be worn away till waters flow in peace,
For in the heart of man art thou, Niagara!
There all thy surges plunge and foam and roar,
And swirl in seething depths for evermore!

When first I saw thy wave 'twas calm and still,
Lake Erie's broad, unruffled bosom deep;
There all thy waters rested at their will,
And dwelt at home with ease and careless sleep,
All heedless of the roar of Buffalo,
Where hearts beat hard and furnaces do blow!

The train sped on, and Buffalo and thou
Did vanish from my sight, while I did roam
Through pleasant fields where apple trees did grow,
In groves of blossom round the farmer's home,
As I did dream of paradise at hand,
And crystal waters winding through the land.

When, sudden, through the silence of my dream
Thy thunder came upon the soft wind's sigh,
The thunder rolled, but with no lightning gleam
To cause the voice that shook both earth and sky;
But soon I saw the cause, thy foaming wave
With rushing tumult cliffs of ruin brave!

Now smooth the wave, then o'er the steep descent
With boulders strewn the broken waters rush;
In frolic mad and sportive mischief bent,
They tug and tear and one another push,
And rock and forest with their revel boom,
Till sport turns earnest in the roar of doom!

On, on, they rush ten times ten thousand waves,
Their edges broken into surge and foam,
While startled fear upon their faces craves
Return to peace in Erie's cradle home;
A vain request! as vain the struggling grasp
Of islands on the way they madly clasp!

The forest's arms, the shoulders of the rock
In vain attempt to break the fatal flood;
The ash tree's roots, the branches of the oak
Can but endure what may not be withstood,
And madden more the stream they fain would stay,
As on it reels a giddy, frantic way!

Goat Island parts the fateful, swelling tide,
Divides the power that it assayed to help;
Two rival waters now to ruin ride,
The tawny lion and his firstling whelp;
With growl and groan and horror in their eye
And foaming lips they summon life to die!

But as the leap is made how calm and smooth!
Yea beauteous the wave that hastes beneath,
So swift it seems to rest, and fair in sooth,
Life's rainbow glory in the heart of death!
O happy souls whose fears are spent before
They reach the verge of death or touch the farther shore!

THE RED RIVER AT WINNIPEG.

It is said that he who drinks of the Red River becomes a dweller in the land it passes through.

O Red River, Red River, now I see thy face,
But little of thy passage did I ever trace.
O whence have all thy billows come,
Billows come, billows come?
O whence have all thy billows come?
Where born thy morning foam?

O Red River, Red River, should I drink of thee,
What virtue in thy cup that speaks felicity?
O whither do thy waters flow,
Waters flow, waters flow?
O whither do thy waters flow?
Drink deep and thou shalt know!

O Red River, Red River, such thirst in me is not,
To drink of thee and share thy strange, mysterious lot,
For brown and turbid is thy wave,
Is thy wave, is thy wave,
For brown and turbid is thy wave,
Though many lands it lave!

O Red River, Red River, may I wash my hands,
Intrust my coming feet to swift, deceiving sands?
Who ventures here abandons fear,
Abandons fear, abandons fear,
Who ventures here abandons fear,
To fate unknown may steer!

O Red River, Red River, I have washed my hands,
Have ventured on thy clay and quick deceiving sands;
What now I am I was before,
Was before, was before,
What now I am I was before,
Unknown the days in store!

O Red River, Red River, I may not libel thee,
Nor boast some other stream is fairer for to see,
For many be who drink thy wave,
Drink thy wave, drink thy wave,
For many be who drink thy wave,
As fortunate as brave!

O Red River, Red River, to peace and truth be sworn!
O ne'er with blood of men affect the blush of morn!
But still may God who giveth good,
Giveth good, giveth good,
But still may God who giveth good,
With blessing freight thy flood!

THE CAVE AND BASIN OF SULPHUR MOUNTAIN, BANFF, ALBERTA, CANADA.

A Spaniard in the days of old
Sought for a fountain rare,
More precious far than mines of gold,
Or pearls that deck the fair!

Through Florida he wandered far,
To drink that living wave,
Gave life that would outshine the star,
Yea, time and death could brave!

He found it not, but had he known
The spring on Sulphur Mountain,
The fruitless quest he'd left alone,
To bathe in that pure fountain!

To roam where links the river Bow
Between the Rocky Mountains,
And bears away the melting snow
With waves of countless fountains!

Or swim within the Basin clear,
And talk with Gellatly,
Renewing youth and health's good cheer,
Is life and royalty!

THE PELICAN.

At Moose-Jaw town upon the prairie's heart,
Halfway 'tween Winnipeg and mountains high,
The while I marked the cloud and lightning's dart,
And heard the thunder rolling through the sky,
A bird majestic rose beneath the cloud,
His plumage bright, where shadows thick did crowd.

His poised and outspread wings were broad and long,
His lofty head was sheathed in beaming light,
And feathers silvered with the joyous throng
Of innate, phosphorescent radiance bright;
But brief the pause beneath impending harm,
The wilderness was his both storm and calm!

He raised his flight into the upper air,
Unto the distant east he flew serene,
To some lone lake apart from fear and care,
That shimmered in the sun with diamond sheen;
Thus soared away the pelican of fame,
As young to-day as when he got his name!

IN MEMORY OF JOHN GAIRNS,

Formerly of Kirklaw-Hill, and then of Dollar,
Who Died at Alloa, 8th June, 1902.

And thou art gone! a friend of distant time,
Of morn and early youth, fair summer's prime,
Bright noon and autumn's westering hours!
The month of June had scarce begun her sway
When thou didst vanish from her vocal day,
To haunt no more her winsome bowers!

The clustering stars that shone in life's fair sky
Fade fast away, as flowers that quickly die,
Upon whose beauty lights the frost!
While dim and gray becomes the vault above,
While ever brew the storms that rear and rove,
And clouds by winds incessant tost!

But even then a bright star may be seen,
In some clear space the ragged clouds between,
Whose lustre guides the traveller's feet;
But ah! uncertain light! some waving plume
Of night's dark caravan of cloud and gloom
O'ercasts that radiance clear and sweet!

So was thy life, dear friend! a star to me,
Thy home a light that shines above the sea,
The weary mariner to guide;
Or window of a cottage on the moor,
A-glow with fire and light at midnight hour,
Leads pilgrims safe o'er deserts wide!

Around thy home the memories of the past
Will linger long, like mountain shadows cast
Upon the vale where flows the stream,
Whose waters feel the shade as on they run,
Though high above shines forth a glowing sun,
That gilds the earth with summer's gleam!

The wit and humour of a sober face,
That hid the sparkle and the faintest trace
Of mirth's hushed laughter in the mind,
As round the board we sat, no more repeats
The play of thought that carking sorrow cheats,
And kindles light in eye-balls blind!

The keen discerning heart the truth that saw,
Prized right and good, detecting falsehood's flaw,
The will unswerving, resolute,
Yet unobtrusive, gave the life to God,
And humbly walked where pious men have trod,
Once eloquent is still and mute!

The hills that guard and nurse the silver Tweed,
Cardon and Culter Fell, that watch the Clyde,
The Talla linns and Posso folds,
Drummelzier Law and classic Powsail burn
That hails the Tweed, and Merlin's ancient urn - -
The still green dell his ashes holds;

The Dawick woods that busk the rural seat
Of Naismith's ancient line, a sweet retreat,
And Stobo Castle nestling deep
In forest shade where Tweed flows soft and still,
Fair Rachan's dell, and Bizzyberry hill,
Call loud to wake thee from thy sleep!

The castle gray where Care and Sorrow mourn,
And join their waves to form the Dolor burn,
That softly flows to Devon's wave;
King's Seat, Ben Cleugh, Skye-thorn, and smooth White-wisp,
The Ochils green where summer breezes lisp,
Or winter gales that storm and rave,

Call up thy form, and bid thee live again,
Where oft we climbed the hill and trod the plain,
And heard the cuckoo's trancing note;
Saw from afar the Grampians in the north,
And 'neath our eyes the silver links of Forth,
The iron span o'er ships afloat!

E'en as the sun that round the world goes
In circling course to where he first arose,
Our friend returns, but not to roam!
He sleeps with kindred dust where streamlets croon,
'Neath Skirling's sod, that feels the breath of noon,
And vails with green his silent home!

The birds that sing o'er thee at early morn
See Kirklawhill, the place where thou wast born,
Where dance the lambs 'mong gowan flowers!
Thy dust is waiting here in peaceful shade
The hour of rising from death's lonesome glade,
To life anew in heaven's bowers!

Farewell! my friend! and while thy kindred dear,
Thy wife and children shed the tender tear
For him they see on earth no more;
May they take heart, through help of God prevail,
By faith in Christ that knows not how to fail,
But steers straight on to heaven's shore!

HORN LAKE, ONTARIO, CANADA.

When jaded with the cares of life,
And weary with the toil,
And one has had enough of strife
To quench the thirst for broil,
To Horn Lake wave away! away!
Where waters in the sunshine play,
Embosomed in the bush!

Through woods of silence let him stray,
Where deer and wild birds rest,
And where the drummer * on the spray
Strikes thunder from his breast!
Till into sunshine he doth go,
Where huckleberries † love to grow,
And busk this lake of bays!

Though he has travelled near and far,
A scene of beauty to descry,
Beneath the sun, beneath the star,
To satisfy the eye,
To Horn Lake let him speed anon,
And launch his boat the waves upon,
Where sings the loon ‡ and dives!

Row in and out the isles among,
New pictures come and go,
As from the blade the foam is flung
Like streaks of fading snow!
Then draw the boat unto the edge,
And springing from a rocky ledge
Swim out on azure depths!

Adieu! Horn Lake! I may not see
Thy beauty any more,
Nor find a day in years to be
Will match the days of yore!

* The drummer is a bird called in Canada the tree partridge. With the flapping of its wings it makes a loud noise, and hence it is named the drummer.

† Huckleberries, a Canadian name for blae-berries.

‡ The loon is a beautiful bird of the duck species.

Yet memory will hold thee fast,
A sea of glass, and ne'er o'ercast,
Where summer lives alway!

But should I brave the sea again,
That laves the land of pines,
To Horn Lake will I haste amain,
Through woods where morning shines;
And in the glory of the west
Renew my day upon thy breast,
With heaven above, beneath!

NELSON, BRITISH COLUMBIA.

Few, few the towns that please mine eye,
Where'er my footsteps travel;
Estranged from field and sunny sky,
There mortals groan in streets of stone,
And thirst like stranded gravel.

But Nelson town wears beauty's crest,
A thing of joyous wonder,
A gem upon the mountain's breast,
That casts a spell o'er hill and dell,
And river flowing under.

Upon the valley's lap it stands,
And on the mountain's sides reclines,
Whose strength and height the town commands;
Yea gold deep hid 'neath silver lid
Builds up her homes amid the pines!

For Nelson is of yesterday,
Where late the lone wood stood,
But yellow gold, the bloom of clay,
Earth's hidden store of precious ore,
Was famed before the flood,

That drew the miner to the spot,
Ransacked earth's chambers deep,
All else in life he deemed but naught,
He toiled by day in shadows gray,
Gold glittered through his sleep!

As ore was found so Nelson rose,
This day salutes the skies,
Where deep below the river flows;
Ah! magic pelf! that ruleth self,
Thy glance made Nelson rise!

MOON-RISE IN OREGON.

Fair moon! thy rounded orb with silver drest
Shines forth this eve upon the harvest fields,
The hills and woods of Oregon far west,
While to the sickle's toils it ripeness yields;
Thy face I know, all other sights are strange
Save sight of thee, thou sovereign of change!

I've seen less change in thee than man on earth,
Though fickle deemed, inconstant in thy mood;
Thy lustre here illumes my place of birth,
Lights man to-day as Noah on the flood,
I thank my God for thee, thy radiance mild
That cheers the time-worn man and wondering child!

The train advanced into the gloom, and sleep
  Bewitched my sense and hid thee from my gaze,
The while I toiled in dreamland's troubled deep,
  Accepting scenes absurd without amaze,
Until at dawn I woke and saw thee set
In golden glory I may not forget!

No longer silver now, but gold, red gold,
  Thy orb did show behind a grove of pines;
Its full of thee and glory did it hold
As whin in bloom on which a June day shines;
But soon, too soon, the glory passed away
As evanescent life from kindled clay!

I lost a friend when thou didst pass from sight,
  Yet not without a token in the sky,
The promise of the sun whose hidden light
  Had kindled radiance on thy mountains high,
And jewelled all the east with colours bright,
A pavement glorious for the king of light!

Up o'er the hills he rose where snow blushed red,
  And threw his radiance on the vale below,
The sparkling stream, the forest overhead,
  Earth's bosom broad with splendour all a-glow;
His face I hailed, a friend from life's first dawn,
Whose smile to pearl turned youth's dewy lawn!

But as the moon the sun himself must pass,
  No star above but what must fall below,
And perish with the glory that is grass,
  The fashion of a world naught but show;
But Thou, O God! our Father up on high
A friend art now, a friend for ever nigh!

THE RIVER MERCED IN YOSEMITÈ VALLEY, CALIFORNIA.

O River of Yosemitè !
  How fair and clear thy heart,
Deserving this felicity
  Of which thou art a part.

With many a curve and winding run,
  Through groves and meads of flowers,
Beneath the moon, beneath the sun,
  Through ever fadeless bowers.

Here green with shadows of the wood,
  There brown with border sand,
Untroubled now by storm or flood
  Thou passest through the land.

The waterfalls attend on thee
  With an entrancing song,
Leap o'er the cliffs with foaming glee,
  And to the valley throng.

These granite hills, so steep and gray,
  And weather-worn with years,
They never know the month of May,
  Nor garb that summer wears !

Beneath the blue, o'erarching dome
  That bends o'er earth and time,
They know not what it is to roam,
  To change from clime to clime !

Not so thy wave, thou travelling stream,
The seasons all are thine,
Fair summer's bloom and witching gleam,
The glacier and the pine!

I see thee through the valley rove,
'Mid meads a-bloom with flowers,
And hear thee murmur by the grove
Where apples deck the bowers!

All beautiful is thy career,
Sweet song and loveliness,
Until the vale is left in rear,
As on thy waters press!

O blind thy wave, Yosemitè!
It knows not whence nor whither,
Unknown is joy or misery
Unto the flowing river!

Yet He who made thy cradle gray,
And nursed thee 'mid the mountains,
And sent thee forth upon thy way,
'Mid playful, milkwhite fountains,

With joy beholds this valley fair,
Through which thy waters wander
In ceaseless song 'mid beauty rare,
Imposing awe and grandeur.

As when at first the world He made,
High heaven and earth beneath,
The mountain peak, the dewy glade,
And all things that have breath,

And lo! His work was good and fair,
Nor was with evil fraught;
So, Merced stream! thou flowest there
The image of God's thought!

THE SPRINGS OF SHASTA, CALIFORNIA.

O REALM where sets the sun in state,
What wonders in thy spacious cradle!
In embryo a kingdom great,
Secure from foes, from those who meddle.

Give me a day in thy land of gold,
Though not to dig beguiling treasure,
But drink of waters clear and cold,
That health impart and youthsome pleasure.

Where California's soil is bare,
And parched beneath the broiling sun,
O, Shasta's springs of virtue rare,
How merrily they gush and run!

I see them coming down the height,
A-foam they dash with life and gladness,
Like Shasta's mount, arrayed in white,
The sight, I trow, a cure for madness!

O, ye who dig through burning sand,
To rifle earth's delusive bosom,
To grasp the glitter of the land
'Mid spectres dire and horrors gruesome,

And all who plan and toil and moil
For Mammon and for self-advancement,
To sit on dust, a heap of spoil,
And deem such life and sweet entrancement;

In vain, in vain ye early rise,
And late into the shadows labour,
Behold this mountain in the skies
Where sparkling waves leap down Mount Tabor!

Come, come in crowds, and eager drink,
Your ladles dip in living water,
Drink fast and long who faint and sink,
Then go with strength and joyous laughter!

Though I should live beyond the span
Allotted to the sons of men,
And distant years grow faint and wan,
Yea, vanish in oblivion's glen,

Above the mist will Shasta loom,
A wondrous sight, entrancing fair!
The breeze upon his snowy plume
That cools the hot and parching air!

And evermore I still shall hear,
And see the rush of Shasta's springs,
Where travellers recover cheer,
Rejoice and soar on eagles' wings!

SUNSET ON THE PRAIRIE.

At eventide from Winnipeg I went
Upon a journey through the lonesome prairie.
The clouds poured rain on corn and untamed bent;
With night and thunder Nature's face grew eerie,
Low mist lay thick upon the meadow floor,
And seemed a sea that flitted on before.

The train sped on, I thought it soon should run
Into that stream of water wavy, wan;
In vain the speed, as well o'ertake the sun
The feeble footsteps of a mortal man!
That misty sea, it flitted ever on,
A shadow vague, the ghost of what is gone.

With silent step at length came royal day,
Within the east his pennon did appear,
A red-dyed cloud above a charger gray;
At sight thereof, night, urged by fatal fear,
Tucked close about her robes of mist and flew,
Yet blessing left behind in crystal dew!

A long, bright day upon the iron horse,
That hasted on with many a start and blow,
We voyaged in a strange and foreign course,
O'er meads unbounded as broad ocean's flow,
The realm of silence and the distant past,
When space lay quiet in a deep sleep cast!

Yet life was there, a large and speckled stock.
The gofer in his hole beheld the wolf,
The moss lark cowered beneath the poising hawk,

And shrank from death as from a yawning gulf;
The loon and teal, the wild duck on the lake,
The Indian on the trail to hunt and take.

The sun drew west, and day's long, lingering train
Slow followed o'er the plain, and tinged the wave
Of lake and stream with sheen of golden rain,
The light that guilds the life has touched the grave,
As set the sun in unabated might,
And left his image on the brow of night!

But ere that orb went down, when first his rays
Had touched the plain with unconsuming fire,
A bird arose, with gold his breast ablaze,
And flew as to the sun he would aspire;
Far o'er the lake that bore his imaged flight,
He westward sped to catch retreating light!

Speed on, thou noble bird! yet what avails
The glory on thy wings that cannot grow,
For swifter far the sun, endeavour fails!
Thy wing must droop through shadows thick and low,
Thy dream of day spell-broken by the gloom
Wherein thou takest rest 'neath night's dark plume!

Though swift thy wing, still fleeter is the night!
O'er hills and seas she follows in thy wake,
With outspread wings that darken what is bright,
And ebon fingers soon will clasp thy neck,
And turn the shimmer of life's golden clay
To dusky vapours and death's ashes gray!

O thou, my soul! seek not the setting sun,
The mocking splendour of a passing world,
The mirage garden where false waters run,
Whence disappointed hope from heaven is hurled,
To change its nature and torment the lost
With joy remembered on hell's grievous coast!

O Sun of Righteousness! true Lord of day!
Guide Thou my footsteps eastward unto Thee!
From vale to hill and cloud, dawn's rising way,
Through gates of pearl to the sacred tree,
Whose boughs stoop down with wholesome fruit and rare,
And lap the stream of life that floweth there!

CASTLE MOUNTAIN, ROCKY MOUNTAINS, CANADA.

And this is Castle Mountain, strange to see!
It seems a thing of human art, but great,
Like those high hills of snow superbly free,
Above the realm where puny men debate,
Record their wars with chisel, pen, and cairn;
No tool of theirs upon thy portals stern!

Above a mound of earth, wide, round and high,
And girt with grass, rise up thy walls of stone,
Yea, living rock, aspiring to the sky
From dungeon depths where evil spirits groan!
There windows graven be, but blind they are,
Nor e'er to weary eyes show sun or star!

The doors are thick and strong, but shut they be,
Their hinges never creaked, nor bolts were drawn,
To welcome day, and let the captive free!
O, dismal night, that never will be gone!
But dwelleth there, the warden of the lost,
Held fast within a hard and rock-bound coast!

From fields of snow on high the mist comes down,
With silent step o'er rock and glacier cold,
Wraps round the walls, the battlements doth crown,
And hides from mortal eyes woe's 'during hold!
But as he looks the gazer hastes away,
Till mist and castle vanish from his day!

So error made, or evil wrought, is deed,
Eternal fact, more lasting than the hills!
A Castle Mountain, prison stern, we rede,
The record sure of sin-begotten ills!
But Heaven to the contrite doth bequeath
Forgiving mercy's sweet, enfolding wreath!

KILDONAN, MANITOBA, CANADA.

Kildonan fair! Iona of the West!
How sweet the sunshine on thy bosom glows!
Where stands the church and lie the dead at rest,
And broad and deep the the great Red River flows!
What sighs for Scotia's hills have whispered here
Their secret to the wave and pensive air!

O, sacred dust! that makes the grass so green!
  Far-gathered ashes from the purple hills,
From lonely glen and isle and sylvan scene,
  Could ye record life's catalogue of ills,
Ye well might daunt the youth beneath his load,
Who travels Time's uncertain, arduous road!

Though great the grief, still greater was the joy
  Of hearts that owned God's overcoming grace,
Who drew on strength naught earthly could destroy.
  Unfainting ran, and won the Christian race;
Now deep their peace, perennial as the flow
Of this Red River fed with endless snow!

THE MARIPOSA GROVE, CALIFORNIA.

O, GROVE of Mariposa! solemn shade!
  The haunt of Silence and the rest of Time,
Where sleep he takes in this primeval glade,
  Or drowsy hears the soft Eolian chime,
When on your boughs the balmy west wind blows,
Let me enjoy an hour of your repose!

Beneath your boughs the ghosts of ages gone,
  With ceaseless hover like the humming bird,
Await on Time, and shield him from the dawn
  Of coming ages trampling on the sward;
For when he sleeps they find a halting place,
A brief delay in their oblivious race!

Your story tell, ye shadows of the past!
When ye can take your breath, old Time at rest,
Before your deeds of fame be overcast,
As Time awakes and travels to the west;
For coming ages will their tale demand,
As every hour runs out its glass of sand.

In vain ye speak, your language is too strange
For this dull ear, that cannot comprehend
The spirit of the past, nor guage the range
Of deeds and songs of old were never penned;
Your voice, the whisper of a fitful breeze,
Now sudden swells, then dies amid the trees!

Mayhaps the breeze that over Eden came,
And shook the aspen tree as cooled the day,
Upon its journey waved the sapling stem
Of this red giant in the morning gray,
And shook the dewdrops from his youthful plume,
As rose the sun and did the east illume!

The wind that blew the tower of Babel down,
And drove the tribes of men athwart the earth,
To wander far with many a curse and groan,
And hollow laughter in the place of mirth,
Mayhaps it fanned the Grizzly Giant's leaves,
And tried his thews of strength in bronzed greaves!

The idle breeze that whispered in the glade,
Nor knew the music in its heart that slept,
Unconscious, artless on your branches played,
For David's harp melodious measures kept,
That lulled the eating care of Israel's king,
And numbed the poisoned bite of sorrow's sting!

Remote from war, the turmoil man hath wrought
Since he with evil eyes has cursed the world,
Ye grew apart on this auspicious spot,
Unharmed by storm when lightning darts were hurled,
On nature's lap for ages long ye grew,
And drank fair summer's luscious cup of dew.

Achilles' wrath made towers of Ilium fall,
The Persian host at Marathon o'erthrown,
The power of Rome that nations did enthrall,
Her triumphs great disaster did atone,
Barbarian floods o'erwhelmed the Tiber wave,
And swept the pride of Rome into the grave!

The Arab's sword, the fiery scimetar,
The Turkish hordes that bore the Moslem flag,
Who sought to conquer paradise by war,
The clang of brass and steel, the warrior's brag,
Ne'er broke the even tenor of your sway
With war's wild shriek while hasting to the prey!

The Spaniard's valour and his thirst for wealth,
His wondrous luck that lit on worlds new,
Who earth and nations robbed by force, by stealth,
From captives' fatal toil his riches drew,
Now prostrate lies, while still your branches wave
Above the dust that wraps the despot's grave!

The bold ambition of the Corsican,
With eagle eye and lip knew how to rule,
Who augured fair to sway the race of man,
And with bewitching glory men befool,
With all his pageantry has passed away,
A gleam of lightning shooting through your day!

Though ye be old, ye well are able yet
To sing the dirge of empires of to-day,
Their story told, their sun of glory set,
While morning's beams upon your branches play;
O, what is human greatness at its best
Beyond a ripple on the ocean's breast?

O, sacred grove! thou, too, must pass away!
As break the fir tree's boughs beneath the snow,
Your branches creak and rend 'neath ages gray,
And through your hollow stems the wind wails low,
As year by year still later grows your spring,
With ever feebler note your minstrels sing!

Until as fallen monarchs * all do lie
Upon the Californian dust of gold,
While trees of coming times salute the sky,
And in dense shade your grave and story hold;
Oblivious of thee the sons of men
And breezes wander up Wawona's glen!

The hour is gone, I hasten from the glade,
Old Time awakes and leaps upon his car,
Away he speeds, and throws an awful shade,
The blossom trembles and the distant star!
Before his face the worlds pass away,
But he who hears God's word abides for aye!

* A prostrate tree of great size is called the Fallen Monarch.

THE END.